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Correspondence

CHRISTMAS CRECHE IN JULY

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Central Valley, N.Y.

To the Editors: I should like, in two capacities, to comment on Maurice deG. Ford's article, "Crèche Landing" [April 6]; the first as a lawyer with some experience in the field of church-state relationships, and the other as a Jew.

As a lawyer, I am not sure whether Mr. Ford was joking or in earnest in suggesting that Justice William Brennan, as the only Catholic member of the Court, might have been concerned that if he were "to enthusiastically approve the crèche, it might appear that he were [sic] unduly favoring his own religion."

If such concern was the motivation, he could have met the danger by the standard formula for such a situation: "Justice Brennan dissents." Instead he wrote an opinion, twice as long as that of Chief Justice Burger speaking for the majority. The opinion he did write manifests no sense of fear. A fearful justice would not suggest that the majority seems to be willing "to alter its analysis from Term to Term in order to suit its preferred results"; nor would he charge it with being guilty of "religious chauvinism."

Fear can hardly explain Justice Brennan's dissent in another case referred to in the article, the one relating to the employment of chaplains to open legislative sessions with prayer; and it certainly does not explain the innumerable cases in which he joined in decisions striking down laws financing parochial school instruction and dissented in others which upheld such laws.

His votes in these cases, as well as those of non-Catholic Justice Thurgood Marshall, who voted with him in practically all of them, can be explained simply by a commitment to the strict separation of church and state, "absolutist and rigidly categorical" as it might be to Mr. Ford.

What, as a Jew, troubles me deeply is Mr. Ford's ho-ho-ho-and-a-hearty-noggin-of-good-rum-punch approach to the crèche decision. He makes much of the fact that "the chief minority group likely to be offended, our Jewish brethren, did not join in the suit to ban the crèche."

One explanation for this, suggested by Justice Brennan, is that quiescence "may have reflected nothing more than their sense of futility in opposing the majority." More bluntly, the answer is fear, a fear which often impels silence, even when one's constitutional rights have been impinged.

Catholics should know this, perhaps more than any other religious group, including Jews. In large measure the Supreme Court's decisions forbidding Protestant-oriented religious instruction and recital of prayers from the King James Bible in public schools, had their roots in lawsuits brought by Catholic parents, with the approval of the local priests, to invalidate these practices. They acted with full realization that the popular reaction would be as repulsive to them as the crèche ruling is to Jews.

As a Jew, I find it hard to accept Mr. Ford's good humor and his praise of the Court's action as a "mellow decision and one to be commended." I find nothing commendable in a decision which for all practical purposes tells us that this is a Christian country, whether you like it or not.

LEO PFEFFER

The author replies

First, I wish to give Mr. Pfeffer, a distinguished and thoughtful attorney, his due. My characterization of Justice Brennan as bending over backwards not to favor his own religion is speculation on my part. It is not supported by evidence. Perhaps I am attributing my feelings to him. For example, before writing my article, I tried to make triply certain that my own religious convictions did not get in the way of my constitutional judgment. At no point in my piece, however, do I attribute fear to Justice Brennan, as Mr. Pfeffer implies.

The Pawtucket crèche case is a very difficult one, as the 5-4 split among the justices indicates. The crèche, you may recall, did not stand alone. It was surrounded, in the middle of Pawtucket's central shopping district, by a Santa Claus house, reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh, a Christmas tree, a talking wishing well and candy-striped poles, among other secular decorations. In its 1971 decision in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, the Supreme Court announced a three-part test for whether a given governmental practice violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. That test is (1) whether the challenged conduct has a secular purpose; (2) whether its primary effect is to advance or inhibit religion, and (3) whether it creates an excessive entanglement of government with religion. Federal District Judge Raymond Pettine had ruled that the Pawtucket display, in which he saw the crèche as central and prominent, had no secular purpose.

First, Chief Justice Burger, writing for the majority, believed the question to be more subtle:

> The Establishment Clause like the Due Process Clause is not a precise, detailed provision in a legal code capable of ready application. The purpose of the Establishment Clause "was to state an objective, not to write a statute." . . . The line between permissible relationships and those barred by the Clause can no more be straight and

(Continued on page 412)

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THIRD-WORLD DEBTORS' PRISON

IN 1981 it was Brazil. In 1982 it was Poland, then Mexico. Then Brazil again, and then Argentina a couple of times running. The international debt crisis has turned into a "Perils of Pauline," with a half dozen countries alternating in the leading role and bringing the world audience repeatedly to the edge of its seats. *Will this be the time that failure to meet a payment brings the whole interlocked financial system crashing down?* The curtain has just closed on another episode — Argentina starring once more — and the answer, again, is "no." The audience will probably relax a bit now — which would be a bad mistake.

Besides the comparison to old-fashioned melodrama, a variety of images suggest themselves for the current debt crisis. Gridlock. Catch-22. A Rubik's Cube, where moving one segment of the puzzle always seems to misalign another piece elsewhere. How the problem began is by now well known — easy loans on easy terms in the seventies, made possible by a flood of petrodollars from OPEC and Eurodollars from American balance-of-payments deficits. Much of this money supported genuine development — contributing, for example, to Latin America's impressive six percent annual growth during the decade. But much of the money was also used unwisely, or spent on arms, or siphoned off illegally, or channeled toward covering the high cost of oil imports. Pushed by competition, by the desire to make balance sheets look good regardless of long-range prospects for repayment, and by confidence that, as Walter Wriston of Citibank put it, "Countries can't go bankrupt," bankers lent rashly. Third-world and Latin American debt, in particular, not only ballooned; it shifted from long-term, fixed-rate loans from other governments or international agencies to short-term, variable rate loans from the commercial banks. Then came the one-two punch: a quadrupling of interest rates between 1978 and 1983 and a lingering world economic slump bringing a sharp drop, for Latin countries, in commodity prices.

That's how it began. How it will end, no one knows. Candid observers, like Harold Lever writing in the June 28 *New York Review of Books*, doubt that the principal of these loans will ever be paid back. The sums are simply too astronomical; and, as Lever points out, not only are the third-world nations unlikely to increase exports and reduce imports to the extent needed to create the surplus required for repayment, but if they did so, it would provoke massive dislocation in the economies of the U.S. and other developed nations.

So, all right, full repayment is unlikely to happen — certainly not soon, probably not ever. The bankers don't say this out loud. They simply want to get as much as possible in terms of interest before the write-off of principal occurs, as it inevitably will even though no one knows quite how. That is the focus of all the recurrent crises. But disaster is not being warded off by the makeshift arrangements that keep squeezing out as much interest as can be paid without quite tipping these countries

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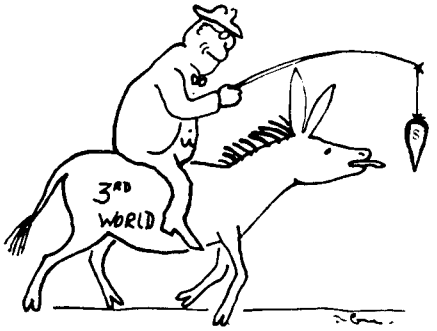
over into financial or political chaos. Disaster is occurring right now. What is at stake is more than the flow of funds and guarantees. For the poor in these debtor nations it's a question of the flow of food, fuel, jobs, and medical services. The real living standard of Brazil and Mexico has declined fifteen percent in the last three years, and in other Latin nations it's worse. Then there is, quite literally, the flow of blood. Not long ago, Brazilians hit with austerity measures required by debt obligations looted food markets. More recent riots in the Dominican Republic took fifty-five lives. And these are only minute surface indications of the everyday loss and desolation that austerity measures have brought to Latin America's poor. The political cost is similarly significant. Argentina's President Raúl Alfonsín knows he cannot cement a fragile coalition for democracy in place by making it the bestower of hard times. Fearing more riots, the Dominican government, one of the region's more democratic ones, felt compelled to buttress its bargaining with the IMF with sweeping arrests of suspect leftists.

Can we really imagine indenturing generations of poor people to the task of servicing a debt that can never be repaid, that is, in principle, everlasting? In terms of immediate suffering, political stability, and long-term economic development, the situation is preposterous.

Various proposals have been made to relieve the jam. Eleven Latin nations, holding their own economic summit at Cartagena, Colombia, want interest rates "capped," penalties for late payment eliminated, and the time for repayment extended. Others recommend schemes for increasing International Monetary Fund reserves and providing the debtor governments with special drawing rights so that third-world countries could maintain interest payments while commercial banks, biting the bullet, gradually write off the debts over time.

All these proposals face similar difficulties. Behind each of them lurks the fundamental question: who should pay? The third-world leaders who contracted these loans? Certainly some of them misused funds or channeled them into Swiss banks. According to the *Economist*, one respectable study estimates that "over one third of the $252 billion increase in the debt of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela between 1974 and 1982 went into buying assets overseas or was salted away in foreign bank accounts." But neither the rich nor the leaders of Latin America can make good its debt now, nor can they be held responsible for events like the world slump, the drop in commodity prices, and high U.S. interest rates.

What about the bankers — and their shareholders and depositors? Martin Mayer, certainly no radical student of the banking industry, is only the latest to insist on the banks' responsibility for knowingly pushing questionable loans —



and their obligation now, to bear a good bit of the burden. Still, it is also true that by swiftly recycling all those petrodollars, the banks performed an important service for the world economy. And in any case the very overexposure of the banks creates an effective obstacle to letting them ride out the crisis on their own: the nine largest U.S. banks have lent the equivalent of a staggering 250 percent of their capital and reserves to the third world, $350 billion of it to Latin America and $290 billion of that to Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. The Continental Illinois case has showed just how vulnerable such "nonperforming loans" can make the banks. And the prospect of major defaults — or even the kind of debtors' cartel, which some saw presaged in the Cartagena meeting — could put the entire international bankung system in jeopardy.

Enter government, and primarily America's — with guarantees, subsidized interest rates, new loans. That means the taxpayers of the U.S. and other industrial nations. Who are not, understandably, eager to pick up such a vast check, especially for the banks.

This uncertainty about who should pay, and how much, is the root problem, but not the only one. Proposals to cap the debtor nations' interest rates have the merit of decoupling their obligations from the measures Mr. Volcker takes to keep the economic recovery from setting off a new round of inflation. (An increase of a single percentage point in the U.S. prime rate adds $4 billion to the annual third-world debt; the most recent half point jump added $800 million to Brazil's bill alone.) But if, as some propose, the difference between the "capped" rate of interest and the going rate is simply added onto the third world's principal, that merely underlines the endlessness of the problem.

A further reality is that all schemes to forgive a portion of the debt one way or another encounter the fact that not all debtor nations are in the same straits. Ability to pay and willingness to do so are mixed together in a complex brew of economic and political factors. Relief for those least able (or willing) to pay hardly encourages those more able (or willing). But rewarding the willing and able with better terms — as the bankers have done for Mexico and Brazil — still leaves the toughest cases to the worst outcomes.

Indeed, even talking about possible solutions may start banks and governments jockeying for a bail-out of some sort. Everyone involved is tempted to play "chicken," threatening a suicidal smash-up of the whole system unless someone else gives way.

The one real answer, of course, to this economic Rubik's

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual summer schedule, only one issue will be published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated August 10.

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Cube is a sustained world economic recovery — without high interest rates. Outside the Reagan administration, however, which continues to whistle a happy tune about the disconnection between astronomical deficits and escalating interest rates, hardly anyone thinks such a beast is possible. If, as some predict, the second quarter of 1985 sees the prime rate at 16.5 percent, the recovery will strip away with one hand anything it offers the debtor nations with the other.

Leaving the problem to the bankers or just waiting, Micawber-like, for something to turn up will not do. Creditor and debtor governments will have to settle on both short-term relief and, equally important, a long-range write-off that, however approximately fair, gives the third world a definite finish line.

We should be clear about one thing. This would not be a give-away. Analogies to the Chrysler salvage are perhaps in order. Between 1970-79, one of the fastest growing sectors of the U.S. economy, at an annual rate of 27 percent, was trade with the third world. Collectively, LDCs in 1980 purchased 38 percent of the total of U.S. exports. This means jobs, one out of every twenty in U.S. manufacturing, one out of five in agriculture. In turn, one fourth of manufactured imports now come from LDCs, and though this has meant a loss of U.S. jobs in stagnant sectors of our economy, the benefits to the average consumer are considerable, estimated at a saving of $2 billion a year.

Yes, the debt crisis resembles gridlock. But in other respects it's also an anatomy lesson like St. Paul's. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you' " (I Cor 12:21). This interconnected world is a new scene, and will take all our ingenuity to adjust to. It's as if, though many, we partake of one loaf.

PROGRESS REPORT

It is a pleasure to announce a number of changes in *Commonweal*'s editorial staff.

Anne Robertson, a veteran of twenty-four years on the magazine has long exercised a wide range of responsibilities in regard both to our review section and the journal's production. With this issue she formally assumes the post of Production Editor.

Joining the staff at this time are two Assistant Editors, Karen Smith and Patrick Jordan. Patrick Jordan's name may already be familiar as the author of two lead reviews and a number of shorter ones over the past year. He is a former Managing Editor and Associate Editor at the *Catholic Worker*. Karen Smith, a June recipient of a Master's degree from the Harvard Divinity School (and the holder of another Master's from Notre Dame), has edited several newsletters and published articles, most recently, in *U.S. Catholic* and *Salt*. We welcome them both to *Commonweal*.

Progress is being made on another front as well. Readers have been responding promptly and generously to our recent letter concerning funds. We have received or been pledged a total of more than $10,000 by 180 new Commonweal Associates. An additional $4,000 has been given in smaller contributions. And aid has come from another source: our printer, Mr. Karl Leichtman, has offered to print one issue free — a very sizable donation.

To all of these supporters, we send heartfelt thanks. Keeping *Commonweal* alive and vigorous seems to be a matter of banding together many Davids in a world of Goliaths. We urge everyone who has considered making a contribution, large or small, to join with these other generous friends — and with our new editors — in advancing the work *Commonweal* has been doing for six decades.

Election '84

TAKE MY WIFE, PLEASE

DID WALTER MONDALE CALL?

I'M a little surprised that Walter Mondale hasn't yet invited my wife to discuss the vice-presidency. He seems to be making a thorough search, including interviews with people I've never heard of. It goes to show that there are a lot of talented people working quietly all over the place. The fact that I never heard of Geraldine Ferraro doesn't mean that she might not make a heck of a fine Veep.

That's when it occurred to me that Walter Mondale should consider my wife for the position. She's smart as a whip, hard-working, pleasant to deal with, and would be an asset on any ticket. I know for sure that she has been for Walter Mondale through thick and thin, even when I stayed with him only through thin. I have to admit that I got all excited about Gary Hart for a week back in the winter. I hope my candor doesn't hurt her chances with Walter Mondale.

I usually don't get too excited about issues and platforms and policies. My most important consideration is how much the candidate reminds me of myself. On that question President Reagan flunks. He's too old and he calls his wife Mommy, even when his kids aren't in the room. The natural alternative was Walter Mondale. He's married to the kind of woman I admire. When she was Second Lady she was a big booster of the National Endowment for the Arts. Thanks to her, citizens in out-of-the-way places get federally subsidized art. Last week our community theater put on a play about the invention of the Dewey Decimal System.

I also liked the way Walter Mondale begged out of a previous presidential campaign on the grounds that he didn't like rubber chicken banquets and the decor of Holiday Inns. So I was an early Mondale supporter. Then I noticed on a couple of news clips that Walter Mondale seemed lackluster. He tends to drone, while the circles under his eyes appear darker and deeper. My support for Mondale began to slip. This has happened before, a slippage of support as I became bored. I was really bored by Ford, and I became awfully bored by Jimmy Carter. I began to worry that Walter Mondale wasn't as

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put off as he used to be by rubber chicken banquets, the decor of Holiday Inns, and conversations with labor leaders.

Suddenly Gary Hart burst on the scene. Watching a clip on the CBS news, I said to my wife, "Isn't this guy kind of . . . cool? I mean, isn't this a pretty cool dude? Doesn't he remind you of me?"

"Not particularly," she said.

So I can assure you that my wife's support for Walter Mondale remained firm, even though Gary Hart compares to me. Then all this stuff came out about Hart: that he didn't know his age, that he changed his name, that he imitates Teddy Kennedy at cocktail parties. Gary sounds like a fun guy.

For me, though, the crucial factor was the New Jersey quote. Gary had a problem: on the same day he had to win primaries in New Jersey and in California. So he sent his wife to California and resigned himself to working in Jersey. Gary is bound to feel a little resentful. So he makes a joke about it. He makes a little joke about New Jersey being one big toxic waste dump and how, on the whole, he'd rather be in California.

I don't know what you know about New Jersey, but the place is the pits. It's run by the Mafia, which is why it's a toxic waste dump. They don't even bother with dumping in select locations. A businessman calls the local truckers and tells them he's got a hot load, so to speak, and could the truckers get rid of it on the Q.T., if you see my meaning. Next morning the commuters on the Jersey turnpike are dodging radioactive barrels.

Admittedly it wasn't flattering to say this about New Jersey the week before the primary, but I thought Walter Mondale came down just a little heavily on Gary. Walter Mondale can be a tiny bit . . . pious. I don't know, maybe he *is* a finer, more caring person than Gary, who imitates Teddy Kennedy and jokes about New Jersey. If you ask me, we could use a little more of the light touch to relieve the tedium of campaign politics.

My wife, who is a finer, more caring person than I, wasn't at all troubled by the prissy tone with which Walter Mondale chastized Gary. So I would say she has certainly shown her loyalty throughout this campaign. What about the practical effect of her becoming the vice-presidential candidate?

Well, I can guarantee that nothing weird is going to pop out, the way it did when McGovern picked that senator some feared had had a frontal lobotomy. And I predict that nominating my wife could prove crucial in the swing states on election day. Maine is going to loom very large in this campaign, and I've done an in-depth study of its complex politics. Maine is full of old Yankees and French-Canadians. All the Yankees have farms or trust funds, and are sure to vote for Reagan. All the French-Canadians have voted Democratic since 1932 and will do so again even if Donald Duck is the nominee. That means that the balance of power in Maine is in the hands of the third electoral bloc, the Hungarians.

It so happens that my wife is a half-Hungarian from Maine. I am pretty darn sure that her entire family would go Democratic if she were on the ticket. Not only could Mondale just about count on the backing of several Hungarians in Maine, he might pick up the votes of some Independents. My wife got a lot of publicity in high school for winning the state debate championship with her brother. I know that many people remember their victory. When you tote up the Hungarian bloc, and add in the Yuppies who followed that debate tournament, Mondale would have a virtual lock on Maine.

I don't want to say anything that would put the kibosh on my wife's nomination, but Walter Mondale would have to understand that she isn't going to traipse all over the country eating rubber chickens, staying in Holiday Inns, and speaking to boring labor leaders. I think a lot of that campaigning could be done from right here. We would certainly be happy to travel to Maine to rally the Hungarians. We always go for a great family clambake on Labor Day, and she'd be happy to squeeze in a couple of campaign appearances, even though it is a holiday weekend.

That's the kind of person she is.

ROBERT H. BELL

(Robert H. Bell teaches English at Williams College.)

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

AN ERA OF EMERGENCE

ON BEING A 'COMMONWEAL CATHOLIC'

JAMES O'GARA'S farewell in the March 23 issue of this journal marked the end of an era for many of us — the end of the era of the "*Commonweal* Catholic" — the term he invoked in his essay. What he did not say, what he did not tell us, was what it meant to be — as he and the other staff of *Commonweal* were in the twenties, the thirties, the forties, the fifties — the voice of and the connection for those laity who laid claim to the right to be church in the world. Those were the decades in which it was not at all certain that the laity had that right. The term "*Commonweal* Catholic" was a term of opprobrium or a badge of moral bravery, depending on the point of view. To have chosen a life of service to and leadership of that laity, as Jim and his confreres did, was to have chosen a life of dedication, voluntary poverty of a kind, persistence in the face of odds and uncertainties, a life dependent on faith — a twentieth-century vocation.

It is hard to explain to those who did not know it what life in much of the church in America was like in those days when *Commonweal* was young. They were still the days of fortress America

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and fortress church. Catholics lived proudly and happily in both — "my country right or wrong"; "my church without stain or flaw."

The church in America had emerged from its immigrant past, but Catholics were still a people apart in many sections of the country and deliberately so. With their own schools and colleges, their own fraternal societies, their own hospitals, orphanages, and charitable institutions, they often merged with the larger community only on election day or when called to military service. A man in his sixties told me recently that, although he lived in a fairly small Midwestern city, he had never known a Protestant well enough to enter his home until he was well into his twenties. "We were taught to stay away from them," he said. Many in the same age group can recall the endless discussions about whether one could go to Protestant churches for funerals or weddings, and whether any sign of participation in the service would be a betrayal of belief in the one true church! Catholics voted for Catholics or for those who protected the rights of the church; otherwise voting was a personal matter and political participation had little connection, in our eyes, with morality.

We were a docile laity expected only to attend Mass, receive the sacraments, keep Advent and Lent, avoid personal sin, and support the church. We enjoyed — is that too strong a word? — devotions, novenas, parish missions, bazaars, church picnics, and bingo. We were well-versed in the Baltimore catechism and in apologetics. (We could defend, if necessary, or, at the very least, explain the Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books.) The church in America was relatively untouched by the social action movements which had stirred Europe; few had heard of the social encyclicals. Catholics were increasingly among the educated, but few were among the intellectuals. American clergy and laity both lived under the shadow of the Roman suspicion that Catholicism and democracy were not easily compatible.

In that world the idea that Catholic laymen could publish a journal to discuss Catholic thought on politics, social trends, literature, and the arts was almost revolutionary. The "*Commonweal* Catholic" who took the responsibility for lay participation in the affairs of the commonweal, who felt that he or she could define the terms of that participation in light of his or her experience as someone lay, Catholic, and American, seemed heroic on one hand, suspect and dangerous on the other.

I can remember finding *Commonweal* on the periodical shelf in my high school library and realizing as I read it each week — realizing for the first time — that there was an organic connection between my family's progressive concerns about rural poverty, inequities in the distribution of wealth, injustice, anti-Semitism, the oppression of labor, and racism — and my religion. The good Catholic could not just avoid personal sin. It was necessary to right wrongs, remedy injustice, find Christian solutions to the problems of society; and it was up to the lay person living in the world .

There were church leaders who saw that as presumption and effrontery. Pronouncements were made and editorials written making the solemn point that *Commonweal* could not really be called a Catholic magazine because it was not directed by the official church. The time was to come when *Commonweal* was banned in certain seminaries and from certain Catholic libraries because its editors differed with some church authorities, not on doctrine, but on the political application of church teaching.

What *Commonweal* Catholics were doing almost sixty years ago was what the church, through Vatican II, finally decreed that they, as members of the laity, should be doing: taking on "the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation" (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*). *Commonweal* came into being as if it were meant to do so just in time to be a forum for the explosion of lay activity and lay concerns which marked the thirties and the forties in Catholic America. It was a joyful and exciting venturing into the world. All these initiatives were chronicled and discussed, even debated, in its pages: lay participation in the liturgy; Catholic labor schools; the Catholic Worker movement; the Catholic rural life movement; cooperatives and credit unions; pacifism; conscientious objection; the interracial movement; the controversies over what was, or was not, *catholic* (as distinguished from what was labeled "Catholic") in literature and art; ecumenism and true *rapprochement* with Jews; and more. It was a time when *Commonweal* editors dared to differ with clerical editors in other publications who espoused Franco and Joseph McCarthy as defenders of the faith. *Commonweal* Catholics held that anti-Communism could not justify fascism or injustice. Altogether it was a halcyon and heady time.

Today things are not as clear. In taking his leave Jim O'Gara pointed to some of the things *Commonweal* readers and writers must grapple with now. It seems to me, as I reflect on his going, that the Kennedy era at home, the Vietnam era abroad, and the unforeseen effects of Vatican II pose still unanswered questions for the "*Commonweal* Catholic." Until we have answered them we cannot be fully sure of what direction to take in the future. But those are subjects for future columns. Just now I want to celebrate the *Commonweal* that was.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Among the many journals commending James O'Gara, as well as *Commonweal*, on the occasion of his retirement, was the Jesuit weekly *America*. Which deserves congratulations in its own right — for marking its seventy-fifth year of service to the nation and church. Also deserving congratulations are *America*'s own outgoing editor, Father Joseph O'Hare, S. J., now entering a career as president of Fordham University, and his successor, Father George W. Hunt, S. J.

Not all the world is smiling, however. From the ultraconservative *Wanderer:* "Only small solace (since he will be replaced by another anti-Catholic clone) can be taken from the news that James O'Gara has retired . . ." A similarly generous comment was made on the changes at *America*.

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Can we know spiritual reality?

DONALD EVANS

A FEW YEARS AGO at a theological conference I heard a paper in which a scholar said something like this: "And St. Paul, following the traditional metaphor already used by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, spoke of a spirit of love dwelling in the heart." As I heard these words I wanted to jump to my feet and protest: "Surely it's possible that St. Paul spoke of a spirit of love dwelling in the heart because that's where he experienced it — as countless others have in many different religious traditions, and as I have myself, especially during meditation, and as people have in secular psychotherapies such as bioenergetics. It's no metaphor. It's a literal truth."

The speaker at the theological conference exemplified an epistemological perspective which I discerned in nearly every paper I heard at that conference. Indeed, this perspective pervades academic thought in general today. This perspective excludes the possibility of any direct awareness of spiritual reality. Accordingly, it is sheer superstition, supposedly, for me to claim to experience myself as spirit, to discern loving life-energy around my heart, to detect harmful or helpful spiritual influences at work between people at a distance, to see auras or feel vibrations around other people, to contact discarnate spirits of the dead, or to become aware of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. Why are all such spiritual claims so obviously false and fantastic for most contemporary intellectuals, including theologians? Because their perspective combines what I will call a relativistic Kantianism and a common-sense empiricism. Let us consider each of these briefly in turn.

Kant's agnosticism concerning reality, including spiritual reality, is well known. All we can know, according to Kant, is how the human mind *must* shape sense-experience: the forms of space and time and the very general concepts or categories such as cause and substance which we humans impose on sense-experience, giving it an intelligible structure. What is really out there we cannot know. We only know reality on our terms, and what these terms are we can deduce in a "transcendental" way. Since Kant, many diverse thinkers have followed him in emphasizing what the human mind brings *to* our awareness of the world, but differing from him in focusing, not on what we *must* bring to this awareness, but on what we *do* bring. What we do bring varies from person to person and group to group, so our alleged knowing is relative to this. The variations in what we bring to our awareness of the world depend on a variety of factors, any one of which can be selected for emphasis. Some epistemologies stress sociological influences, others select psychological influences or cultural-historical influences. And some epistemologies, following Wittgenstein, depict our knowing as shaped by linguistic practices within a social "form of life." What all these perspectives have in common is a rejection of any allegedly direct way of knowing reality.

In so far as contemporary *theology* is governed by this neo-Kantian relativism, we have a variety of approaches to epistemological questions, but they all agree in assuming that we can only study the human conceptual or linguistic framework which is brought *to* an alleged reality, not the reality itself, for it can only be discerned *through* the framework. This relativism may be either skeptical, fideistic, or conservative. The skeptical version, a "hermeneutics of suspicion," exposes ideology by means of insights drawn from Freud or Marx or the sociology of knowledge. Knowledge-claims are thus radically undermined. If the stance is fideistic, the theologian makes an explicit leap of faith, putting his/her trust in a particular conceptual framework or "language-game" as the authoritative vehicle through which to know and by which to live. To be a Christian means to opt for Christian words and symbols. Where the stance is an unreflective conservatism, there is no sense of choice in the matter. Being a Christian means thinking as a member of a reliable historical-traditional community: "If Jeremiah and Ezekiel and then Paul spoke of a spirit of love dwelling in the heart, that is what I will think, too." But whether one is skeptical, fideistic, or conservative, the common assumption

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is that I cannot directly know reality — especially spiritual reality. The issue is whether to trust any conceptual or symbolic framework which includes spiritual *terms*. The skeptic refuses to do so, the fideist opts for a framework, and the conservative does not question his or her framework.

In relation to spiritual reality, relativistic Kantianism is often accompanied by a common-sense empiricism. What I mean by this is simply the assumption that experience is limited to *sense*-experience and that sense-experience of any alleged objective reality is limited to the publicly observable world — which is accessible to virtually everyone. Concerning this publicly observable world, common-sense empiricism may be qualified by Kantian caution concerning claims to know what is *really* there. Usually, however, empiricism and Kantianism are in conflict concerning knowledge of physical reality. But concerning *spiritual* reality Kantian and empiricist forget their quarrels and agree in rejecting any possibility that you and I can know directly, by experiencing or discerning what is there. Both tend to reject as sheer superstition any alleged spiritual awareness. To a common-sense empiricist the real world is the publicly observable world, plus, perhaps, the human mind or center of consciousness inside each human body. The mind sometimes imaginatively creates *fantasies* of spiritual entities during abnormal states of consciousness such as dreams, reveries, trances, and meditations; but to regard these fantasies as realities is a reversion to a pre-enlightened, sub-human primitivism and superstition — so the empiricist assumes. Or, less harshly, an empiricist can take up a form of relativistic Kantian perspective on beliefs and practices pertaining to spirit and spirits. Their origins can be explained sociologically, psychologically, or in terms of historical-cultural influences. In such a very typical combination of relativistic Kantianism and common-sense empiricism Kant's own agnosticism concerning physical reality is forgotten and is confined to spiritual reality. Such an empiricist has no resort to neo-Kantian explanations when someone claims to see a stone. The explanations are called in when someone claims to see a spook.

IF THEOLOGIANS are reluctant to accept any knowledge-claims concerning spiritual reality, it is not surprising to find that social scientists are also reluctant. Several years ago I attended a conference in Berkeley on new religious movements. The central issue was why people join these movements and remain in them. A wide variety of psychological and sociological explanations were proposed, but one kind of explanation which seems to me at least equally relevant was almost totally overlooked: a spiritual explanation. In my association with some of these groups I have often observed people becoming aware of themselves and others as *spirit*, perhaps for the first time in their lives. This is an exciting and momentous discovery for most post-Enlightenment Westerners. It may even be mistaken for an experience of God. Often people continue in the new religious movement mainly because there they know they can continue this awareness of spirit, whereas outside — they assume or are taught — it is unavailable.

Although individuals who join such groups and remain in them usually have non-spiritual motives which are open to investigation by secular psychology and sociology, the main explanation is often a satisfied search for spiritual reality. Such a spiritual explanation, however, is alien to social science, for it presupposes that there really is a spiritual realm which people sometimes discover. The most that a typical social scientist can assume here is that one important motive may be a person's *conviction* that he or she has found spiritual reality. The conviction itself has to be explained by reference to *non*-spiritual factors. For example, a person might believe that he felt a spirit of love in his heart because that's what the religious tradition taught, or because he was deprived of love in infancy and needed to believe this. What I would insist, however, is that there *is* a spiritual realm and that some forms of meditation enable a person to become aware of this realm. And if a social scientist won't test my claim by taking up meditation himself, he should be more genuinely agnostic concerning such claims, never *assuming* that non-spiritual explanations are adequate in accounting for people's convictions concerning spiritual reality.

Thus far we have looked at theological and social scientific assumptions concerning the question, "What can I know about spiritual reality?" A typical *philosophical* approach can be seen in a recent book by the distinguished philosopher, Susanne Langer. In Volume III of her trilogy on the origins of the human mind (*Mind: An Essay on Feeling*), she explains the evolutionary origins of human belief in a spirit-world: gods and goddesses, devils and angels, souls of dead people and animals, spirits inhabiting not only persons but also animals and trees. She is amazed that human beings who are intelligent enough to carry on the practical affairs of life can possibly have imagined such absurdities and asserted them as facts. Since for her, as for most academics today, such beliefs are false, their explanation must be sought in how the human mind works. Langer's account of the human mind resembles Kant's in that at its core it is a claim concerning how the human mind *must* work. Since Langer's claims arise from reflections on biology and evolution, we could call it an "evolutionary-transcendental" deduction.

In a review for *Commonweal* (July 15, 1983), I outlined her ingenious and insightful theories concerning why human beings have had beliefs and practices concerning spiritual reality. Her explanations are very illuminating in accounting for why the spirit-world alleged by various individuals and communities differ, and in understanding some of the motivations of people both past and present who have come to believe in spirits and in life after death. But for Langer the spirit-world is always and entirely a human creation, a fantastic delusion.

What if she is mistaken in this? What if human *discoveries* of super-sensible realities are mixed in with the imaginative projections which she astutely describes? Then, although her explanations are still relevant, they are inadequate. What the human mind brings to spiritual reality is not the whole story, for the human mind sometimes discerns spiritual reality, especially during meditation. The whole investigation becomes

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much more complex. It requires investigators who practice the relevant forms of meditation or who are at least open to study testimonial material from those who do. I readily concede that various non-spiritual explanations are still relevant. Kant and Marx and Freud and Langer and Wittgenstein cannot be ignored. But we also cannot ignore the testimony concerning spirit from most human beings in human history prior to the so-called "enlightenment" in the West.

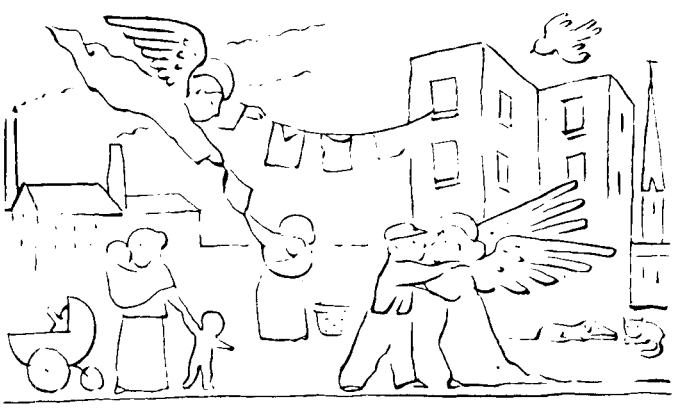
Thus far I have questioned a theologian's non-spiritual account of why St. Paul located a spirit of love in the heart, a group of social scientists' non-spiritual account of why people join new religious movements, and a philosopher's non-spiritual account of why most human beings in the past have believed in spirits. Now I am going to question some accounts provided by non-fundamentalist biblical scholars and theologians for the New Testament story concerning the transfiguration of Jesus. In general, the story is not interpreted literally, that is, in terms of an objective spiritual reality which people can sometimes discern. My own first impulse to interpret it literally was evoked thirty years ago when I first saw a fresco of the transfiguration by the great Florentine artist Fra Angelico. In depicting the change in the appearance of Jesus's face and clothing, Fra Angelico painted a literal oval-shaped aura which is analogous to those which I now realize is discerned by people whom we today call psychics. But liberal New Testament scholars today typically don't believe in auras. Nor are they at ease in interpreting what happened when Moses and Elijah allegedly appeared as two discarnate spirits communicating with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Such an event would be entirely intelligible and unsurprising to modern spiritualists and to participants in various non-Christian meditative paths. But most non-fundamentalist biblical scholars seem to be skeptical concerning spiritual reality in general and the transfiguration story in particular. Or if they are not skeptical, they are puzzled and confused.

It would be a monumental task to document this sweeping claim, but I can at least illustrate it by considering as a representative example a book entitled *Transfiguration* by a relatively conservative Anglican theologian, J.W.C. Wand. In this book, published in 1967, he draws on many biblical scholars, comparing and appraising their accounts. He himself suggests that probably Jesus's facial appearance did change as he prayed. After all, a person's face can "light up," as we say, on seeing his beloved. How much more so for Jesus in prayer to God. But perhaps the disciples' report of this was amplified by them or by others so as to include talk about a change in Jesus's clothing. Why? Partly because hints of the miraculous tend to be exaggerated as a story is passed along; partly because there was a prevalent traditional notion that such a change can affect the clothing; partly because the Hebrew concept of "glory," linked with the transfiguration by Luke, includes the notion of a shining, garment-like substance. Wand also notes that early Christian apologists arguing with the Jews could have been moved to depict Jesus as a new Moses being transfigured on a mountaintop and as a fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets who conversed there with Moses and Elijah.

Wand is not entirely skeptical. He is convinced that the transfiguration narrative has a core of historicity, and that something significant happened. He notes that St. Matthew refers to the event as a "vision" and that St. Luke emphasizes the trance-like sleepiness of the disciples, so probably the event was not physical but only mental. But for Wand this mental status does not make the event unreal. Indeed he ends by calling the transfiguration a "veridical vision" which Jesus somehow shared with his disciples. But how a veridical vision differs from a private fantasy he does not indicate.

What Wand lacks is a metaphysical and epistemological framework in which one can distinguish between (1) publicly observable physical events, (2) private fantasies, and (3) objective spiritual events which are partly discerned through what we today often call "psychic" awareness. Wand does briefly consider an approach which might have led him in this direction, viewing the transfiguration as a "mystical phenomenon" alongside other alleged paranormal events in the lives of both Christian and non-Christian holy persons: clairvoyance, levitation, telepathy, etc. I quote: "Such alleged incidents are generally viewed with dislike by minds trained only in the exact sciences. So far from regarding them as helps to faith we drape them 'in the decent vestments of symbol and myth.' 'Losing the humble sense of wonder, we only find queerness in the phenomena which our conceptual systems refuse to accommodate.' The difficulty about these alleged experiences is that they are individually so difficult to prove, and that, even when accepted as proven, they are almost always capable of a 'naturalistic explanation.' " Wand does go on to say that it is by no means impossible that some such unusual experience may lie behind the narrative of the transfiguration, but his comment about "naturalistic explanation" remains. What does he mean by this expression? If he means an explanation which requires no reference to special divine intervention, I would agree with him. The spiritual realm has its own "natural" structure and characteristics. But I suspect that what he means by a "naturalistic explanation" is a non-spiritual explanation, for example, one in physical and/or psychological terms.

If so, I would simply assert that he is mistaken. No such explanations are available and adequate with reference to telepathy, clairvoyance, spiritual healing, spiritualistic phenomena, or transfiguration. Instead, we have "naturalis-



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tic'' *assumptions* which rule out various paranormal events. It is these assumptions which dictate the conclusions, not only for secular thinkers but also for many Christian theologians. And often the assumptions are unacknowledged. It just seems *obvious* that some non-spiritual explanations must be possible and that the onus of proof is entirely on the person who makes a claim concerning spiritual reality to show that every possible non-spiritual explanation has been ruled out.

My own personal conviction is that the transfiguration of Jesus did take place and that it involved both what we now call ''paranormal'' changes discernible to psychics and also, more importantly, a total surrender and transparency of a human being in body, passions, mind, and spirit to the divine Spirit. Nobody can discern such surrender and transparency unless he/she is at least beginning *both* spiritual awareness and personal surrender to the divine Spirit. Nevertheless I concede the remote historical possibility that the transfiguration of Jesus may not have happened at all, or that we may have only a simple story about a happy face in prayer which was amplified into a fantastic piece of religious propaganda. But although I concede this is possible, for me the onus of proof is on those who hold that the story is *not* true as it stands. Here I resemble a fundamentalist, but not because I believe in the literal inerrancy of scripture. Rather I have no initial reason to disbelieve the story because of the assumption that such things can't or don't happen. There may be *other* reasons to disbelieve the story, or to see it as a composite, a kernel of truth plus a subsequent elaboration. Maybe, for example, a story about a resurrection-appearance was somehow transferred back into the earthly life of Jesus. But that is a different kind of issue. The main issue for me is whether a transfiguration can occur, as an objective spiritual event which also involves surrender to the divine Spirit, not only for Jesus but also for *us*. Similarly, problems of scriptural exegesis raised by biblical stories of allegedly objective spiritual *healing* raise issues concerning the possible reality of such healing for *us*. Is it all superstition, or at best a kind of ''faith-healing'' in which our beliefs can somehow help us to get well — the placebo effect? Even more radically, when St. Paul tells us in Romans 8.16: ''The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,'' is he assuming that we are aware of our spirit? Is such awareness possible? My own view is that such awareness is not only possible but necessary for an adequate awareness of the divine Spirit.

FEW CHRISTIANS today are clearly aware of themselves as spirit. There are various reasons for this. I have stressed the intellectual climate of our age, with its combination of Kantian agnosticism and common-sense empiricism. I should also note, briefly, two other features of the intellectual climate which have deeply influenced Christian theology, and which also impede awareness of oneself as spirit. I am thinking of existentialist theology and liberation theology. Elsewhere I have argued that both of these have deeply biblical roots and emphasize important truths. These must be retained in spite of anything I say here. But existentialist theology tends to exclude, or at best blur, spiritual awareness, because it proposes only two metaphysical and epistemological pigeonholes: scientific investigation, and personal discovery, or creation, of meaning. Discernment of objective spiritual reality fits neither of these. And liberation theology, while rightly recalling Christian thought and practice to the communal justice-commitment of the Hebrew prophets, sometimes rejects all concern with the spiritual as an escapist sanctioning of the oppressive status quo: ''You may be enslaved and hungry now, but there is pie in the sky by and by.'' But what if there *is* such pie in the sky, spiritual consolation in both this life and the next? Does the political misuse of a truth make it false?

Both existentialist theology and liberation theology are post-Enlightenment developments. They share with neo-Kantian relativism and common-sense empiricism a rejection of pre-Enlightenment spiritual awareness as ''superstition.'' Charismatic Christianity, too, is partly post-Enlightenment — not concerning God, but concerning spirit, and in a different way. It tends to attribute all positive paranormal phenomena directly to God, provided that the ''correct'' doctrinal beliefs accompany them, and the rest to the devil. Hence many experiences of human spirit are misinterpreted as divine or diabolical intrusions. A person's new and exhilarating experience of him/herself as spirit is often mistakenly assumed to be a visitation by the Holy Spirit, and an eruption from the emotional unconscious or a psychic invasion from another human being is mistakenly seen as a visitation by the devil. And a genuine surrender of the whole self to God, amply evidenced not only by positive paranormal phenomena but also by an abundance of the fruits of the Spirit is dismissed, or — the ultimate blasphemy — it is attributed to Beelzebub, because the correct Christian beliefs are absent.

Thus in various ways the intellectual climate of our age imposes severe intellectual constrictions on any Christian exploration of spirit. But there is a specifically Christian constriction as well, which emerged long before the Enlightenment. This constriction is, in my view, a distortion of a legitimate pastoral caution which goes back to St. Paul, whom I hear saying something like this: ''Don't be egoistically preoccupied with spiritual phenomena such as visions or tongues or prophecies or ascents to the third heaven. What matters is your openness to the Holy Spirit of love, your being lived by God in Christ as you surrender your old self-centered self.'' I totally agree with this, but a distorted outcome of this has been that there is little practical or theoretical teaching concerning the human spirit and the spiritual realm in Western Christianity. When I asked a Benedictine monk and scholar why this is so, in contrast with, say, the tantric traditions of the East, his reply was that there has been a fear that Christians would become attached to the consolations of God at the expense of their focus on the God of consolations. This caution arises from a realistic sense of the subtlety and strength and pervasiveness of human narcissism, which can pervert all advances in spiritual awareness. Even Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after the splendors of his baptismal experience, which could have

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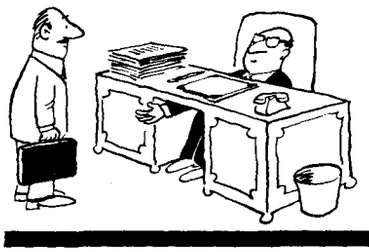
twisted into an egoistic power-trip and even a pact with the devil. Today, however, most Christians avoid spiritual pride in the same way that a pauper avoids material pride, by having little in which to be proud about. For St. Paul's caution against a sinful stance towards spiritual phenomena has become, in practice, an effective caution against the phenomena themselves. This is a tragic error. If Christians are to learn how to surrender the whole self to God, to be lived by God, they must have an awareness of self as spirit or spiritual body in complex interdependence with self as physical body, emotions, and mind. We should realize, of course, that spiritual awareness, especially at the lowest or purely psychic level, is no more intrinsically religious than awareness of physical body or emotions or mind. And we should also realize that there are many levels of spiritual awareness, from the psychic, which is merely sensational and fascinating, to the sublimely loving, which is transforming. But a transfiguring surrender of the whole self can only occur if we are aware of our whole self, which includes our self as spiritual body. And spiritual self-awareness has a special importance in all this because a minimal element of it seems to be necessary if we are to *experience* what surrender means in *any* of our aspects, not only the spiritual but also the physical, emotional, and mental. Spiritual self-awareness is an essential part of the process by which eventually a person surrenders the whole self to the divine Source, so that he or she becomes a transparent channel for the divine Spirit, a luminous human being outshone by the divine Light. For Christians, this transfiguration happens through contemplative identification with Christ: "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit . . . . For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ."

But these words of St. Paul can be read as little more than a pious inspirational pep talk unless, at the very least, we are aware of ourselves as spirit in a spiritual realm. How can we begin to have such an awareness? Concerning this, contemporary Christianity provides little counsel. Yet if we draw on some of the largely-lost resources within our Christian tradition and if we have the humility to sit at the feet of teachers from non-Christian traditions who do provide wise counsel, we can readily come to know in our own experience a great deal concerning spiritual reality. Indeed for many people the initial process is relatively easy: becoming aware of the various energy-centers of the physical body, beginning to see or to feel other people's energy-fields or spiritual bodies, learning how to channel healing energies to others, getting into contact with discarnate spirits who can help us or whom we can help, discovering the blurred boundaries between self and others in the spiritual realm plus the blurred agencies ("I yet not I"). None of this by itself leads to God, and all of this, like any human endeavor, can be perverted into a mere ego trip. Yet it provides the necessary though elemental basis for what can follow: the arduous process of radical transformation or transfiguration in which we gradually uncover and surrender whatever prevents our being lived by God.

In such a process we Christians can draw on resources of spiritual wisdom from both our own heritage and non-Christian traditions. What distinguishes our path is the privilege of identifying with the risen Jesus Christ in his completed tranfiguration and thereby in his healing and liberating identification with the sick and the poor and the oppressed — other dimensions of Christian life which I have neglected in this necessarily one-sided essay.

WHEN THERE IS NO SENSE OF THE PUBLIC REALM



The political philosophy of sleaze

J. PATRICK DOBEL

WHAT PUNDITS and Democrats have labeled the "sleaze factor" will probably harrow the Reagan administration for the rest of its tenure. This seemingly endless array of peccadillos, sweetheart deals, and improprieties touches officials as diverse as the counsel to the president, director of the CIA, head of the EPA, and various cabinet officers, not to mention many low-level appointees. For many people, the "sleaze factor" simply confirms what they always suspected about the greed which lies at the heart of any Republican administration. For others, it simply represents the problems of individuals adjusting their business or entrepreneurial ethics to public office.

In reality, few of the incidents on the sleaze list represent either overt venality or personal corruption; rather, they reflect something far more disturbing. The right wing of the administration possesses no abiding sense of public service and the

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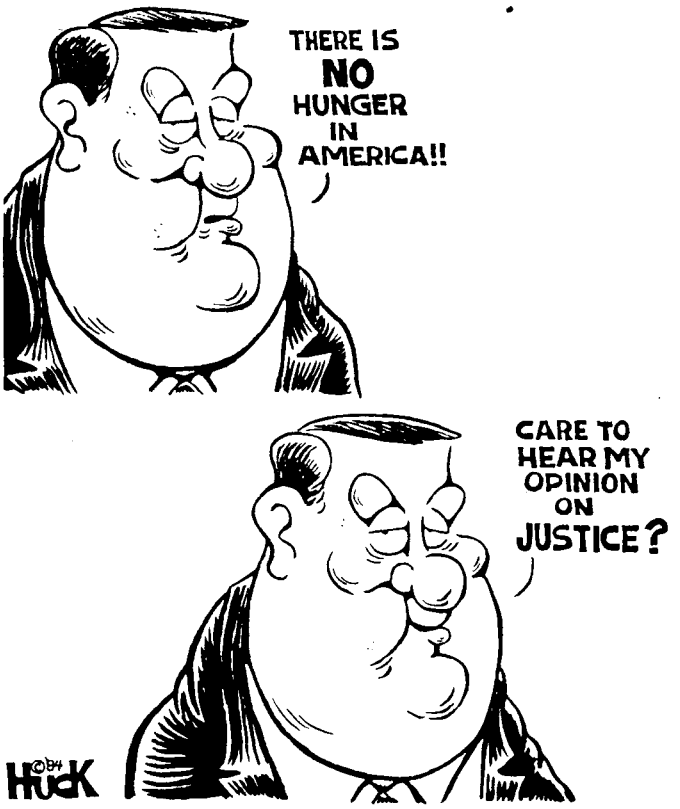
responsibilities it entails. This, in turn, stems from an even deeper ideological and moral confusion at the administration's core, a confusion which collapses the distinction between the public and private realms.

Public service depends upon two different ideas. First, it presumes an autonomous public realm with its own ideals, methods, and substance. The public domain is bound by our ideals, aspirations, and symbols of government; it is arrived at through rituals of procedure, public accountability, and election; it is articulated in the laws of the land. Public action seeks to define and realize shared public aspirations through discussion, election, and politics, and gives these aspirations reality through law and policy. This conception of the public does not simply reduce to aggregated private concerns.

Second, public service presumes the ideal of "service." The military at their best exemplify this ideal. We speak of "entering the service" or the "service academies," and have in mind the special combination of power, duty, character, and commitment which soldiers take on when they serve their country. The ideal of public service obviously asumes competency to perform an assigned responsibility, but it goes much further. The vocation to serve the public involves special powers and privileges not given to private citizens and requires that the public servants establish psychological and moral distance between their private and public worlds. Individuals do not enter public service primarily for private gain. Public servants must make conscious efforts to seek disinterested solutions to common problems. They must separate their private opinions and interests from their public obligation to obey the law and transcend their personal prejudices and desires. Sometimes, public servants must actually sacrifice private interest to the obligations of the public realm. At other times, they must obey laws or abide policies with which they morally disagree. I do not suggest that public and private morality are completely disconnected, but we must realize that they are distinct and entail different responsibilities. Ultimately, they are linked by our commitment to the same basic values which underlie a humane life and a just government. When these basic values conflict with public service, then internal opposition, resignation, and public dissent are all honorable and reasonable options.

Life as a public servant should not be without honor, praise, or comfort. But nations accomplished something of great value when they enshrined the moral ideal that those who possess public power should exercise it in a disinterested manner according to public rules rather than for personal or tribal gain. This separates private or group gain from public service and helps to minimize the corruption of power. It also supplements accountability by leading individuals to internalize their fidelity to the goals, methods, and law of a country. The very idea of public service means that we believe individuals can be trusted morally to restrain their desire for gain and positively act to seek a public good or fulfill a public charge in a disinterested or accountable manner. In another idiom, this subordination of personal self to public duty means that officials act from a sense of civic virtue. Ironically, this



administration speaks stridently of virtue out of the "moral majority" side of its mouth, but it only means private virtue; it has little serious conception of the need for civic virtue in its public officials.

Public life and civic virtue presuppose a public realm with its own symbolic and ritualistic integrity. Rituals reassure citizens that officials remain accountable and that governors do not cloak private interests with the common good. Public symbols and rhetoric create and sustain bonds of common aspiration and justification across parties and between citizens and governors. Official actors embody the ideals of the society. As such, public actions must always earn their legitimacy in people's eyes and reinforce the legitimacy of the public order. To violate these rituals and responsibilities of office besmirches the symbols sustaining the community and, as in the Watergate crisis, can devastate people's trust in the political system. Thinkers from Aristotle to Machiavelli recognize, as do the consistent decisions of the Supreme Court, how exceptional propriety on the part of public servants gives substance to disinterested policy and maintains the legitimacy of the political system.

AT ITS RIGHT-WING CORE, the administration rejects any serious idea of a public realm or common good beyond national defense. Its policies continually try to shrink public responsibilities. Even when faced with overwhelming public consensus upon certain obligations, administration representatives struggle to deflate the goals and make them private responsibilities. The disastrous attempts to replace public welfare with volunteerism merely represent the most evident case of their evisceration of the properly *public*. On the other hand,

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their efforts to reinvigorate public life usually inappropriately inject private morality into public life as typified by attempts to reintroduce public religion or regulate sexual mores. An administration which seriously rejects public responsibility and public action in any area but defense will not be able to generate a serious ethos of public service. Emanuel Savas's exit from the Department of Housing and Urban Development after ordering his staff to help rewrite his book *Privatizing the Public Sector* nicely illustrates the problem.

The ideological and personal confusion of the private and public realms among members of the current administration accounts for most of the sleaze problems. First, officials do not see any difference between the interests and methods of the private sector and the responsibilities to the public. Second, individuals have no sense of the personal requirements of public office and morality, and confuse their private and public identities.

The first failing shows up most clearly in the lack of fidelity to the law throughout the administration. Whether in civil rights or regulation, in any area where the officials personally disagree with the law, the law remains unenforced, or enforced only under constant pressure. Anne Gorsuch Burford halted virtually all serious enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency for two years. The lack of fidelity to law is accompanied by a remarkable disregard for competence in making political appointments. When the administration is not foisting barely experienced personnel into the position of Chief Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board or unleashing Ms. Gorsuch, James Watt, and Rita Lavelle on administrative agencies, it regularly debilitates agencies with bad management. It purges trained cadres of public servants through coordinated budget cuts, personnel "reforms," and legal inertia, and compounds these actions by bringing in a remarkable array of ill-informed, hostile, and incompetent low-level appointees. Even when agencies are reluctantly called upon to perform their tasks, they perform them haltingly with less competence, personnel, and "esprit de corps."

Finally, officials like James Watt at the Department of the Interior or Rita Lavelle at the EPA simply saw no autonomous common good and possessed no capacity to think about problems in a morally disinterested way. They conflated the public good with the interests of the private constituencies involved in their areas of responsibility. They experienced no qualms about consulting, outside of the publicly sanctioned channels of consultation, with the very groups they must regulate, or having these private groups buy dinners, pay for travel, or provide exorbitant honorariums. In the end, these officials regularly accepted the private groups' preferred solutions on policy whether or not consonant with the law.

CIA Director William Casey's refusal to surrender control over his investments in firms associated with his agency, or Presidential Counselor Edwin Meese's trouble with the multiple coincidences of individuals, who financially helped him, getting government jobs, demonstrates the other half of the problem. Such individuals as these acknowledge no serious responsibility to reconstruct their private lives and decisions to accord with the duties of public life. While willing temporarily to sacrifice higher incomes, they otherwise wish to maintain all the financial benefits and freedoms of private citizenship while exercising privileged power in the public realm. The Casey case is especially significant because he exercises control in the one area where the right wing acknowledges a strong public interest and a concern with maintaining "esprit de corps" and service traditions. Yet even here, Casey refused to sacrifice the privilege of maximizing his personal gain even if it could conflict with his public obligations. Throughout the administration, officials have bitterly resisted both disclosure requirements and blind trusts. They wish the best of both worlds and see no need to give up private prerogative for the sake of public propriety. In a similar manner, Edwin Meese does not seem to see that calculations of interest always bend to the existence of public power in a person. Personal favors for and by public officials seldom qualify as simply "personal" given the realities of political life.

Edwin Meese's financial dealings as well as his rhetorical insults of the poor reflect an inability to understand the symbolic and ritual requirements of public service — a lack of understanding that influences the administration's far-flung insensitivity to appropriate public behavior. Officials casually use public money for exorbitant private transportation or expensive office redecorations, and use their staffs for private activities. James Watt finally self-destructed by employing insensitive and ethnically divisive rhetoric which showed an utter lack of understanding of the need for appropriate public demeanor from officials in a deeply pluralistic society. Meese's unblushing refusal to see how his private dealings might tarnish his functioning as the chief law enforcement officer of the land demonstrates an identical blindness. This insensitivity to the symbolic and ritual requirements of private men in public life explains the perplexed and even aggrieved reactions many officials express when called to account for their confusion over public and private lives. In her own way Rita Lavelle symbolized all the personal and moral failures of the administration with her incompetence, infidelity to law and oath, conflation of private interest with public good, and utter insensitivity to procedure or public terms of discourse.

More than one wag has opined that we should have expected nothing less from Republican administrations — they might have also added from Democratic machine-based administrations. Such simple answers do not suffice. Both moderate Republicans and liberal Democrats possess a long tradition which sees public service as an honorable vocation for a noble cause. The Reagan administration regularly betrays this tradition, given its ideological and personal predilection to collapse the public into the private. Then it regularly turns to individuals from the public-service tradition to save itself, as it did when William D. Ruckelshaus was brought in to rebuild the EPA. The administration has yet to learn that public service requires more than personal decency. It requires something this administration profoundly lacks — a personal commitment to the autonomy of public life and fidelity to its rituals and laws.

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The Oxford legacy

DAVID B. NOBLE

THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY of the Oxford Movement, which occasioned a flurry of articles and conferences last summer and fall, has now all but passed. But the event is still worthy of notice, especially in these pages. So crucial were the questions raised for the church, and so embracing the answers, that the Oxford Movement cannot be allowed to recede into historical neglect.

The Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century was a movement in the Church of England to restore Catholic teachings and practice — though, avowedly, not *Roman* Catholic ones. But whatever the limits this small group of clergymen at Oxford University set themselves, they achieved the first major, creative encounter between Catholic culture and British civilization in two hundred years. The historical and theological restoration they produced from the records of the early church has had a profound influence all across the Western Christian spectrum.

The movement's legacy to the Anglican communion is perhaps most obvious, but its long-term influence upon Roman Catholicism, chiefly through the work of John Henry Newman, has been of such central importance that it deserves particular emphasis.

The Oxford Movement arose from a peculiar crisis in the Church of England, a crisis not separable from a constitutional crisis in the British nation at that time. Economic deflation following the end of the Napoleonic wars plus introduction of steam machinery into industry had sent angry mobs of the unemployed raging across Jane Austen's England. Displaced by power looms and steam-powered threshers, they blamed the whole Establishment for their plight, and burned clergy residences, including that of the Bishop of Bristol, in their travels.

Anglicanism also seemed to be losing its grip on the ruling classes. Growing public sophistication and skepticism about the religious establishment threatened to send government reform commissions probing into country churchyards, more specifically into personnel and salary practices where reform was in fact badly needed. And in the same period, political spillover from the ongoing Irish "question" led to the seating of Protestant "dissenters" and Roman Catholics in Parliament (most notably, Daniel O'Connell in 1829), where they might have a hand in crucial decisions, perhaps even doctrinal ones, for the established church.

A government proposal to abolish, through merger, ten unloved dioceses of the colonially imposed Church of Ireland was a last straw for many conservative clergymen who had begun to fear not only for their perquisites but for the doctrinal faithfulness and perhaps even the continued existence of the Church of England. Even those who had a dim feeling of how richly the ten bishoprics deserved suppression felt that such an action by the government, rather than the bishops, constituted state encroachment on the church's proper sphere. (Of course, since tax monies and other coercive forms of support were involved, the issue is far less clear from our distance.)

It was in this edifying context that John Keble preached his Assize Sermon of July 14, 1833, for the opening of a court term in Oxford. That sermon, later remembered as the beginning of the Oxford Movement, characterized the situation the church faced as "national apostasy." But what lifted this sermon, and the movement it inaugurated, above the level of the Tory reaction they started from, was the positive ideal they proclaimed. Together with the many books, articles, pamphlets, lectures, and sermons issued by the movement in the next twelve years, Keble's sermon envisioned a visible church founded by Christ and the Apostles, holding its identity and authority through the historic succession of bishops under the mandate of the early councils and fathers of the church. (Keble at that point actually favored disestablishing the church — severing its ties with the state — but later he joined the movement's other leaders in a wary antidisestablishmentarianism.)

This high, avowedly Catholic view of the church raised eyebrows in the religious establishment, but many churchmen, high and low alike, took a positive line toward the movement because it gave an answer to government encroachment. For a year, there was much riding to far-flung towns and parishes for meetings and the signing of petitions. But gradually, as the government's church reform proved moderate and Parliament failed to impose liberal doctrine on the church, the activity of the movement dwindled to the publishing of tracts at Oxford under Newman's direction; hence the name "Tractarian" was attached to the group. When Edward B. Pusey, another Oxford clergyman, signed one of the (usually anonymous) Tracts with

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his initials, he became the first publicly visible leader of the movement, which then was termed "Puseyite" by some for whom the odd sound of that word expressed their misgivings about the project.

But meanwhile the Oxford Apostles (as they also have been called) pressed on in their discovery and recovery of the Catholic world. Within a warm, celebrative spirituality that was peculiarly sensitive to the individual's relationship to God, they wrote about the real effects of the sacraments — the regenerative effects of baptism and the real presence in the eucharist — and began to hear individual confessions. They restored forgotten decoration and ceremonial to the liturgy (quite sparingly by later Anglican standards) and began to say various forms of the daily office, in church and privately. They revived customs of fasting, and essayed other, more individual, mortifications. And they published histories and translations that made the early church centuries present and available to a culture well-read in Scripture but largely ignorant about its immediate aftermath.

By the end of the 1830s, alarm at these developments was widespread, and after 1840 the Anglican bishops, whose authority the movement venerated, began to turn against it. At the same time, ongoing research into the patristic era uncovered some striking examples of the early church behaving — in the Donatist and Monophysite controversies — as if it was not only Catholic but Roman Catholic. Frustration arose from the tepid devotional climate of much of the English church, and from its doctrinal compromises, and a movement toward Rome set in among a significant segment of the movement. In 1845 this culminated in the reception as a Roman Catholic of Newman, who by that time was the best-selling author of sermons in the history of England. (His "Sermons Plain and Parochial," preached mostly in the 1830s, are a high point of the movement's luminous spirituality, and still are read.) In the ten years after Newman's submission, it has been estimated ten thousand adherents followed him to Rome.

The movement at Oxford fell apart, but Keble, Pusey, and many others soldiered on in the Church of England. In following decades the movement bore widespread fruit in the Anglican communion, inspiring the founding of religious orders and missions to the outcast. The restoration of Catholic ritual in many Anglican churches was another such fruit, as is the widespread sacramental consciousness in that communion which far outreaches the boundary of the "High Church."

Newman was (conditionally) ordained a Roman Catholic priest of the Oratorian order, and established a secondary school for boys in a poor district of Birmingham, where he spent the rest of his life. It was chiefly through him that the Oxford Movement's riches were communicated to the Roman Catholic body. His fundamental, original work as philosopher, historian, and theologian, and his gift as one of the great prose stylists of English letters, made an impact on his chosen church which was not visible until a century later. During his lifetime it often seemed that he was working in an environment even more hostile to his insights than had been the Church of England.

Set into the Roman church of Pius IX, the Tractarian spirituality took on different meaning. Where the Oxford Apostles had been concerned to assert the jurisdiction and authority of bishops, that point hardly needed laboring in a Tridentine context. Rather, depth of relationship and delicacy of meaning, which had been taken for granted at Oxford if only because everyone involved was a British gentleman, became crucial points at issue. Ideas and projects submitted by Newman were repeatedly, and often crudely, crushed by prelates and administrators at Westminster and Rome, many of whom had hardly any idea of what was involved. Despite their efforts, Newman's emphasis on caring for each individual's needs and matching administrative concerns with pastoral ones became a major source of the pastoral direction taken by the Second Vatican Council.

Newman's insistence on relationship and dialogue in the church was not merely a product of his class background, or Oxford's or even his own personal sensitivity. It derived equally from his reading of church history out of primary sources. He came into the Roman church already equipped with a clear knowledge that peremptory, one-way communication from superior to inferior was not the basis of the ancient church. Its occurrence was always a perversion and diminishment of Catholic communion.

There was much of this kind of diminishment in the Roman church of the mid-nineteenth century, where some of the highest authorities seemed to pride themselves on an absolutist manner. When Newman published a journal article titled "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Christian Doctrine" less than ten years before the opening of Vatican I, he put his priestly career under a cloud — as far as the official church was concerned — until he was quite elderly. (A century later, at Vatican II, the climate was quite different, and Newman's work in these areas made crucial contributions to the ideas of collegiality and co-responsibility in the church that developed during and after that council.)

But despite deceptions and delations Newman persisted in his vision of real communion in the Catholic church. His greatest battle with forces of repression in the church came in the area of education, where he was unwilling simply to ignore the waves of skepticism and religious relativism which swept all areas of Western thought outside the schools and publications narrowly controlled by church authorities. Roman Catholicism had so far been partly successful in sheltering its faithful from the winds of infidelity, he conceded. But he believed that isolation could not work indefinitely as a way of dealing with such widespread and fundamental cultural change, and that even in the short run such policies would alienate and drive away educated Catholics — a group, in Newman's view, which played a crucial role in maintaining the vitality of the church. And, of course, hiding from the intellectual life of the West would negate the church's missionary thrust in large, crucial areas of human life.

Much of this was epitomized in a celebrated conversation Newman had with his diocesan bishop. Told that Catholic schools which offered inferior education in secular subjects

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would cause the laity to send their children to school elsewhere, Bishop Ullathorne demanded to know just who these laity were. Newman replied that he did not know who they were, but "you will look foolish without them."

But Ullathorne was not really a villain in the Newman saga. The worst conflicts arose when Newman was invited to found a first-class Catholic university in Dublin and, later, when he tried to open a Catholic chaplaincy at Oxford. His victorious opponents on these occasions were two archbishops, Paul Cardinal Cullin of Dublin and Henry Edward Manning of Westminster, the latter an Oxford convert of a rather different sort. Both these prelates distinguished themselves at Vatican I through their work on the drafting committee, which more than once tried to impose a statement of papal infallibility as absolutist and one-sided as possible. Newman was distinguished in his opponents, and bore the worst the period had to offer in the way of high-level misunderstanding.

After Vatican I, which Newman did not attend, he wrote a public "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" which brought the Vatican definition of infallibility in harmony with his understanding of church history and true communion. This "Letter" helped to open the way for the "moderate infallibilism" of Avery Dulles and Peter Chirico this century, although it was a lone voice in its time.

When Pius IX died some leaders of the British Catholic laity asked the new pope, Leo XIII, to name Newman a cardinal. Leo agreed, over the objections of Manning, and the effect was to lift the cloud of magisterial suspicion from Newman's name and work. By then Newman was seventy-eight and had largely ceased to write, but his basic approach, built on his reading of the church fathers and nourished in the spiritual and intellectual soil of the Oxford Movement, was vindicated. After his death in 1890 some of Newman's writings were called into question (notably "On Consulting the Faithful," and during the witch-hunting period under Pius X). Some of his disciples and intellectual descendants were delated and persecuted, but Newman's own writings came through unscathed.

Instead, his influence spread slowly through the Roman Catholic world. His major works on faith and reason and the historical development of the church were breaths of fresh air in a period when church scholarship was dominated by anti-Modernist oaths imposed from Rome. His authority pervaded the period of ferment that preceded Vatican II, and at that council he was more often quoted than any other single writer. Pope Paul VI was said to have read Newman more than any other Catholic doctor during his pontificate. Newman's time seemed to have arrived.

But curiously, now that we can see that the victories of the last council were early skirmishes rather than final achievements, and now that we are just getting the range of

THE 'MARY ROSE'

FROM WATERY GRAVE TO ECUMENISM

THE DEMISE of a Tudor warship in 1545 has posed an ecumenical question almost four and a half centuries later. The seven-hundred-ton ship had gone down under the eyes of King Henry VIII himself as it left Plymouth Harbor with a flotilla of Tudor vessels sailing to engage a French fleet prowling the coast of southern Britain. A sudden gust of wind had caused the *Mary Rose* to heel so drastically that water poured into her open gun ports. The crew attending the cannons were lost as well as the ship.

When the *Mary Rose* was lifted from the watery grave into which she sank more than four-hundred years ago, her hull revealed more than naval artifacts. The skeletal remains of her crew were also recovered. While the collection, identification, and restoration of the artifacts — sundials, leather jerkins and shoes, musical instruments, backgammon and chess boards, dice, and navigational instruments — presented no problem, the burial of those who perished with the *Mary Rose* did.

What burial rites should be followed, Catholic or Anglican?

Eleven years prior to the ship's loss, King Henry had rejected papal authority but had not repudiated the Roman Catholic liturgy. Consensus in England was that the seamen had been baptized Roman Catholics but were Anglicans at the time of their death.

An English litany existed at least a year before the *Mary Rose* went down, and the Lord's Prayer was in English, but the first *Book of Common Prayer* was still four years in the future. The rites of the English church were basically the same as those practiced in Salisbury cathedral throughout the Middle Ages, a fact which enabled present-day Anglican authorities to settle the problem of burial rites.

In the spirit of ecumenism that would have astounded King Henry, the Church of England will hold a burial service in the Old Garrison Church, an ancient structure thought to be Henry's battle headquarters at the time of the tragedy. The requiem Mass for the crew will be in the Sarum Rite, the medieval rite of Salisbury. The Lord's Prayer and the Bidding Prayer will be in English while the Ordinary of the Mass will be in Latin. Suitable sixteenth-century music will be played.

Provost David Stancliffe of Portsmouth Cathedral has invited a number of Roman Catholics to attend the July 19, 1984 ceremony. He regards his invitation as another step along the road to reconciliation with Rome.

The crew's remains will be interred in a vault at a spot overlooking that area of the Solent where they perished. The *Mary Rose* is now in the process of being enshrined in Portsmouth's Dockyard No. 3.

ROBERT T. EGAN

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Newman's deeper insights in ecclesiology and epistemology, his writings and reputation seem to be on the wane. By now he is reprinted and invoked more by the Catholic right than by the post-conciliar mainstream. It is difficult not to think that the right misunderstands him in important ways. And it is sad to think that many who invoked him twenty years ago have relinquished their hold on him at a time when he is needed more than ever.

When feeling particularly thwarted, Newman said that it was Oxford that had made him a Catholic, not a series of scholastic arguments. God's truth is liberally distributed in the world for those who want to find it, he seemed to mean, and is the same truth within or without official church channels. The Oxford Movement, a Catholic revival in a Protestant culture which arose outside Roman control and later engaged in critical dialogue with the magisterium from within and without the Roman communion, may be the greatest single example of that kind of Providence.

VIETNAM—A MEMORIAL DAY POSTSCRIPT

Easing the conscience

GORDON C. ZAHN

AS CEREMONIES GO, it was modest in scale. At most we numbered a dozen (not counting the patient dog) standing in the rain across the street from Boston's downtown recruiting offices. Organizers, remembering the heady days of mass demonstrations on the Common, had hoped for more. Surely where 100,000 had rallied against their being sent off in the first place, a few hundred could have gathered for the solemn reading of names of the two thousand or so Massachusetts men killed in action in Vietnam.

Elsewhere in Boston the turnouts were more impressive. Monuments were unveiled. Bands and uniformed veterans paraded. Politicians and clergymen vied with each other in impassioned patriotic eulogies. The evening news telecasts featured clips and interviews from several of the more emotion-filled celebrations; but the station whose crew had covered our similar gathering made no mention of it. A justifiable editorial judgment, no doubt. We paltry few could not match the others in color, number, or enthusiasm. Besides, it might have been too depressing.

From the nation's capital came the coverage of the super-extravaganza surrounding the internment at Arlington of the Vietnam War's Unknown Soldier. The impressive procession, the ritual gun salutes, and the usual assemblage of dignitaries provided President Reagan with the setting for his almost classic oration filled with hyper-patriotic platitudes such as school children of his (and my) generation were called upon to recite in more innocent days when it was still possible to believe in the glamour and glories of war.

The crowning event — one which gave the president full opportunity to display the professional actor's power to manipulate audience emotions — was his awarding of the nation's highest tribute, the Congressional Medal of Honor, to the forever anonymous remains. To the extent that he linked both the honor and the unknown's sacrifice, by none too subtle implication, to his administration's increasingly unpopular foreign and military policies, his speech demeaned both.

Let this not be misinterpreted. All who fought and certainly all who died in Vietnam deserve to be remembered and, yes, honored by the nation responsible for their being sent there. It is a scandal that the war's unpopularity carried over to the men returning from hellish tours of duty, making them the objects of scorn and resentment. The bitter controversy over the continuing effects of Agent Orange (and its less than satisfactory settlement) testifies to the government's reluctance to accept and meet its responsibilities to them.

As a pacifist, I did my best to oppose their, and the nation's, involvement in that thoroughly discredited conflict. Now that it is over (at least in its active phase) it is a failure in national integrity not to do everything possible to adequately compensate its veterans for the physical and psychological trauma they suffered and in many cases must still endure. If one adds, as I must, that there are even greater unmet responsibilities toward the Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange and our other indiscriminate weapons and strategies, this does not lessen the concern for veterans' rights.

The president's attempt at revisionist history is not likely to gain wide acceptance. What does seem to be catching on, however, is an attitude of retroactive indifference. Some of those interviewed on television made the point that it makes no difference what kind of war it was; just being there and obeying orders was enough to merit uncritical approval and praise. The same logic, it is well to note, was used to justify honoring those who served in Hitler's armed forces in World War II.

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It is a relatively small step from there to the logical and moral absurdity of regarding all who died in all of history's wars, no matter how unjust, as heroes worthy of undying gratitude and reverence. Saying it may be offensive to some, but it must be said: many who fought and died were guilty of perpetrating acts of extreme brutality which should insure Vietnam a high place in the record of this nation's most inglorious moments. It was wrong and cruel to stigmatize all returning veterans for those acts. It is equally wrong to ignore the fact that some who did not return dishonored themselves and their nation by their behavior. It is a perversion of the very notion of honor for the president or anyone else to reduce it to a matter of simply being "on the scene" and dying.

EVERY DEATH in war is a personal tragedy; dying unknown deepens the tragedy immeasurably. In a very real sense it obliterates a human existence completely. There are so many things one would like to know about every unknown soldier, not only the few chosen at random for enshrinement. Mr. Reagan included a few of the questions to be asked in his eulogy. The really important ones, though, were ignored.

Some have to do with the accidentals that meant so much when he was alive but which we now see as being of little or no consequence: race, ethnic descent, religion, economic and social status. We can guess at some of them — it is most likely, for instance, that the man selected for the honor had been poor and black and barely out of high school. Perhaps a drop-out. Trapped much too early to endure the horrors of a jungle war, he died unknown and probably alone.

What youthful hopes and aspirations were so cruelly canceled in one terrifying instant? What family circle is broken and deprived of even that small comfort of knowing his fate? Did he have a "special girl"? His friends, do they occasionally think of him?

Most important of all, how did he feel about being there? The president's glowing assumption that he was witnessing to the "spirit of freedom" and all the other banalities of his address are almost certainly false. Such sentimentalized attribution of higher motive would have been hooted down by this unknown soldier and his more fortunate buddies. They knew they were there because they had been drafted in most cases, and it would not have taken them long to realize they were paying the price for the stupidities and arrogance of men much older (and presumably wiser) than they. Myra MacPherson's "Eddie" — in the June 1984 *Progressive* — spells it out:

> I knew I was gettin' out of there — if I had to kill every one of 'em. But I was a coward. I was gonna kill 'em out of fear. I don't believe in heroes. They felt so guilty about us being there, they gave medals out like candy. Everybody come home lookin' like Georgie Patton. I told one reporter the truth and he didn't believe me. They wanted to write what a big hero I was. A buddy was still on fire and I carried, I crawled with him twenty-five feet. It had nothin' to do with heroism. It was because I did not want to be alone. Everybody else was dead and I was sittin' there cryin'.

"Eddie" was a volunteer. No one knows about the subject of the president's gushing romanticism. Chances are that, like "Eddie" and most of his comrades, this young man would have been counting the days until his release from a thoroughly hellish experience, quite unprepared for the earlier release that caught him unawares.

It may ease the conscience and serve the Reagan administration's political objectives to declare him a hero, but there is no conceivable way to support that assumption. For all anyone knows, he may have died in panic cowering helplessly in some shelter that proved less secure than he hoped. Worse still, he might have met death burdened with guilt for some of the atrocities that had become almost commonplace, that "spur of the moment thing" — this is "Eddie" again — "where they had just killed someone who was close to you. Everyone in the village would deny the enemy was there and then maybe you'd just kill somebody."

His religion means nothing to us now, but what did it mean to him then? Perhaps he was a Catholic who had come to realize the war was unjust and the killing immoral but who lacked the courage to refuse to continue with what had become for him mortally sinful behavior. If it is shocking to suggest that Mr. Reagan's "hero" died a moral coward, we should also know that, if this was the case, much of the blame should be borne by the chaplains, the religion teachers, the parish priests, and bishops who failed to provide him with the spiritual guidance and support he would need.

To raise these questions and suggest these possibilities is not to deny that there were authentic heroes, even in Vietnam, and that this unknown soldier may have been one of them. We may hope this is the case, but we shall never know for certain. We should at least spare him, whoever and whatever he was, the indignity of exploiting what little was left of him as a propaganda device for glamorizing war and the military.

THE QUALITY of heroism is rare and often encountered in most unlikely times and places. It should not be reduced to the wearing of a uniform. However many evidences of true battlefield heroism the record of Vietnam contains, one must include others deserving of that title. Young men (women, too, and priests and nuns) proved their heroism by going to prison or enduring private and public indignities — "saving the day," morally speaking, by their protests. Offensive as the suggestion most certainly would be to the president, some of the heroes in uniform were those who accepted punishment and exile for refusal to take further part in the slaughter.

Heroism is not limited to wartime. There are heroes among us today. Young men and women are offering years of their lives in service to the victims of an unjust social order here at home and elsewhere in the world, the unjust order Mr. Reagan and his administration seem determined to preserve at any cost. Perhaps we should focus our Memorial Day ceremonies on the Peace Corps workers, religious lay volunteers, and all the other courageous servants of the poor in the ghettos of our major cities, the rural slums of Appalachia, and the teeming

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barrios of the third world. Some of them, we must never forget, gave their lives in sacrifice. My friend, Maura Clarke, and her three martyred companions died as heroes; but I am sure they would insist that whatever honor we pay them must be shared with thousands of others who perished for speaking out against the oppressors and persecutors our nation supports.

Once again, those who went to Vietnam, and especially those who died, deserve to be remembered. That magnificent memorial listing their names in the thousands upon thousands is a deeply moving experience for all who have made the pilgrimage to it. The unknown dead deserve their more pretentious memorial, too. But those black marble slabs and the gleaming white tomb should be seen as commemorating not heroes but victims. Some were both, but most were not. The one thing we know for certain is that they were *all* victims, and this is what we should remember on Memorial Day. Victims not only of the blow or bullet that ended their lives but, in a more profound sense, victims of the human weaknesses and failings which produce the hatreds and fears which lead to war.

This is what the few who gathered in the Boston rain to name the dead were trying to say. Only a few passersby bothered to take the flyers we offered them, but those who did would have found our answer to what was taking place in Washington and in so many neighborhoods in Boston. Speaking of those who died, we said:

> Some of them went unwillingly, but had no choice because of their economic status; others went willingly, thinking that their efforts were on behalf of their country, on behalf of Vietnam, and this faith was betrayed. We can never give back what we have taken from them, but we owe them a more honorable legacy, a legacy of peace and justice. This is why we must not lose our will to search for the truth, to remember the truth, and to act upon the truth. Until then Vietnam will never be over.

Stage

PLAYWRIGHT'S DILEMMA

STOPPARD & KOPIT

TOM STOPPARD'S *The Real Thing* has become the pseudo-serious hit of the season. It has received both the New York Drama Critics Circle Award and a Tony as the best new play of 1983-84. Replacements for the stars are ready in the wings since a long run is predicted, and road-company cities can expect a version of it next season. I somehow neglected to write a review of it when it opened, but now that Broadway has received another drama about a playwright's problems — Arthur Kopit's knobby, demanding, unhousebroken *End of the World* — perhaps some comment on the successful Stoppard is an appropriate approach to the much more interesting Kopit play, which was certainly not received with open arms.

Henry, Stoppard's playwright, has a speech on words that has been much quoted, out of context, since the play opened. Good intentions or deep convictions are not enough to fuel a play, Henry says (more elegantly); art brings small changes in the world — in so far as it brings any at all — because precise use of language, properly arranged, can form something substantial. This defense of the writer as professional, which may well be Stoppard's point of view, is answered by Annie, who pulls a page from his typewriter and reads a fragment of jargon from a sci-fi filmscript. There is no reason why Henry's speech cannot be true and he, as playwright, an inadequate illustration of it, but the play as a whole seems to insist that a way with words is not enough.

The Real Thing is more about the personal than the professional education of Henry. In the course of the play, in which he leaves Charlotte for Annie, he learns to love, to be jealous, to compromise, to recognize that the world is not as neat as a properly-worded construct might make it seem. Despite the witty lines, the play is essentially sentimental, which may be why it is so popular, and it ends on a lightly, lubriciously happy note that seems benignly fake to me. But then much in the play does. The opening scene — Henry's play — is a brittle, Noel-Cowardish exercise in coping with infidelity which is supposed to reflect the playwright's lack of feeling, but the scene in which Annie's husband learns of her affair with Henry is just as cornily theatrical, although presumably it is to show the pain of the real thing. I have difficulty sorting out Henry's and Stoppard's clichés, for everyone with the possible exception of Annie (thanks in part to Glenn Close's performance) is a stereotype. *The Real Thing* is neat and amiable and a touch banal; I prefer Stoppard in a less cozy play like *Night and Day*.

Kopit's play, like Stoppard's, is not really about play-writing. It is about the prospect of nuclear annihilation. His difficulty in dramatizing such a subject becomes his conceit, and the play is about a playwright commissioned to write a play about the end of the world who finally decides the only way to do so is to write a play about a playwright who . . . . Michael Trent, Kopit's playwright, has decided that a dramatist is a kind of detective who must ferret out the secret in any situation. His obsession gives the play its frame, a parody private-eye narrative that is less amusing than Kopit hopes; yet, the idea provides a workable analogy for the artistic process and, more important, gives ideational and emotional direction to the work.

When Philip Stone, the millionaire who wants a play written that will expose and perhaps inhibit the impending doom, hires Trent, he tells him only that Trent must find out on his own what Stone knows and that he has been chosen because he recognizes evil. There are two secrets to be uncovered. The first, the result of Trent's Washington investigation, is that everyone involved in the numbers game, the scenario juggling of deterrence, knows that the system does not work but does not believe what he knows. The second secret Trent finds within himself. He remembers, with a little help from Stone, that he once stood at an open window and contemplated

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tossing out the infant son he adored, and the ugly thrill that stayed with him even as he closed the window and turned away is allied to the attraction of annihilation, the curiosity and fascination edging us toward the end of the world.

From this description, one might not know that much of the play is funny — if frighteningly so. The second act consists of three interviews: a general/physicist, now a pipe-smoking country gentleman, gives a rationally irrational explanation of the necessity of nuclear dependence; a Russian expert with a thick accent (a bit too Strangelovey this) insists, a touch too enthusiastically, on the inevitability of war; a discreetly gay couple who work for a war-games think tank, playfully explicate a nuclear-war scenario while they whip up dinner for Trent. Any of these might be at home in a political revue, anti-nuke cartoons with no force beyond their immediate effect, but Kopit has designed them to fit into the growing knowledge and despair of his playwright, so that they are dramatically much more than satiric interludes. The play is also full of show-business jokes, the most sustained one being the playwright's agent, named after and presumably modeled on the famous Audrey Wood, who was Kopit's own agent. Sharply delineated by Linda Hunt, she is a motherly figure whose pastel suits and tea table manners cover a steely professional. She seems a single-note comic character until the last act when, asked to face what Trent has discovered in Washington, she becomes suddenly human and vulnerable and, unwilling to believe what she now knows, escapes into the Connecticut countryside.

Stone tells Trent that a play is the best vehicle for his warning to the world because it is the form that appeals at once to emotion and intellect. *The Real Thing*, in so far as it is about the art of playwrighting, says the same thing. *End of the World* effectively embodies it. GERALD WEALES

Art

THE NEW MOMA

PRESERVING MODERNISM

OVER THE LAST decade New York's real-estate dealers have learned to pay attention to New York's art world. With good reason. Wherever the artists and their galleries have gone, real-estate prices have immediately climbed. Like the pioneers of a century ago, the artists have made territory once considered dangerous "safe" for those unwilling to risk the new. Soho is the classic case of the art-real estate boom. Once artists began constructing loft studios in buildings that at the turn of the century housed the city's garment industry, a neighborhood even the middle-class wanted no part of suddenly became chic. Now the Soho gentrification process is spreading to the Lower East Side. Streets that used to belong to junkies and the poor have become, with the arrival of a 1980s' generation of galleries, a desirable place to rent and build condos.

In a city with a 1.9 percent housing vacancy rate, the art-and-real-estate connection is likely to persist. But the Museum of Modern Art with the completion of its new home, has shown that the process can at least be stood on its head. By allowing a fifty-two-story condominium tower to be built over property to which it controls the air rights, MOMA has been able to finance a $55 million project that doubles its exhibition space and gives it a new six-story West Wing. In exchange for its air rights, MOMA has already received a $17 million lump-sum payment and in the future will benefit from tax-equivalency payments that by the year 2000 are expected to total $3 million annually.

The result is a lesson in real-estate management that urban museums with a need for cash and space are sure to notice, but the overriding significance of what MOMA has accomplished in the middle of Manhattan lies in the renovation itself. In 1939, when it moved from the Rockefeller-owned town house that held its collection to the international-style building of Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone, MOMA was making a clear statement about its purposes. The founders of MOMA were determined to get Americans to look at art that challenged the traditional master works which then dominated established collections, and they wanted a building to symbolize their intentions. With its factory-like facade of marble, translucent glass, and metal, the Goodwin-Stone building was a perfect choice, one that immediately set MOMA apart from the Beaux-Arts Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In its Goodwin-Stone building MOMA had not only the right home for the Cézannes and Picassos it would feature in its early years, it also had the right home for the abstract expressionism it would champion in the years following World War II. When in 1964 MOMA expanded with an East Wing designed by Philip Johnson, it was being consistent with its initial building impulse. In the 1960s as in the 1930s, it was making clear that the modernism it collected would be surrounded by the latest in modern architecture.

In the late 1970s, however, when the museum decided to expand again, it faced a very different set of circumstances. The battles it had poured so much energy into during its pioneering period were now safely in the victory column. MOMA was no longer the new kid on block nor the leader of an avant-garde art movement. It was living in a world in which, as *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger has pointed out, "both modern art and modern architecture have become the establishment of our culture" and in the process lost their power to shock.

The new MOMA, designed by Cesar Pelli, Dean of the Yale School of Architecture and former project designer for Eero Saarinen, reflects this change in history. With its understated construction and airy spaces, it provided an environment that assumes MOMA's position in the art world rather than challenges the viewer to notice it. "In the case of the Museum of Modern Art, there is no question that the building should be a background to the collection," Pelli has declared. "The

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Museum of Modern Art has incredibly well-developed theories and attitudes of how modern art should be exhibited, and we took advantage of them."

The kinds of changes Pelli has wrought, while preserving MOMA's 1939 facade and Philip Johnson's East Wing, are apparent upon entering the museum. One enters from the same point on West 53rd Street as before, but this time through a much larger lobby that does not stop pedestrian traffic just beyond its doors. The new lobby immediately draws the museum-goer to the light that pours in from the glassed-in hall looking out on the sculpture garden and West 54th. There is no feeling of vacuous space, as in an airport lobby. Just the opposite. The contrast the gray granite floors and low ceilings of the lobby make with the glassed-in Garden Hall is both eye-catching and a directional signal. One knows not only where he should go next, he knows where he wants to go next.

The most striking change comes, however, as soon as one reaches the Garden Hall escalators, which, like those in Paris's Beaubourg, allow a view inside and outside the museum at the same time. In the old MOMA, vertical movement was slow, constrained by narrow Bauhaus staircases and elevators that filled up too quickly. In the new MOMA, circulation is itself a pleasure. The escalators have had no trouble accommodating the enormous crowds that have poured into MOMA during its opening weeks; and once on them, one feels no rush to get anywhere. The Garden Hall enclosing the escalators is a glassed-in atrium that offers a spectacular view of both the New York skyline and MOMA's sculpture garden, and on each floor the perspective changes.

This sense of seeing the familiar in ways that are more intense, more contextually loaded than before, sets one up for the second- and third-floor galleries housing MOMA's permanent collection of paintings and sculpture. Here, too, the design of the museum is significant in terms of what it preserves through change. William Rubin, director of painting and sculpture, has not merely added new space, he has determined the size and arrangement of rooms, the very positioning of walls. The results are galleries that allow work done since the 1960s the open area it needs but up through Pollock and Rothko reflect the fact that modern art is basically easel art and should, as Rubin contends, be seen in apartment-sized rooms that retain a feeling of intimacy.

On the second floor one moves clockwise through a series of rooms leading from Post-Impressionism, to Fauvism, to Cubism, to Futurism, and eventually to pre-World War II Surrealism. It is a survey that is essentially chronological in order but by no means tediously so. There are special rooms for Picasso, Matisse, and Mondrian as well as architectural allowance for turns and surprises. Monet's *Waterlillies*, painted at the same time Cubism was flourishing, have a corner room of their own that suggests their apartness from the mainstream of modern art; and Russian Suprematism and Constructivism are placed in a staircase off to the side, allowing one to go directly to a room full of Matisses.

On the third floor, where one moves counterclockwise, the same sensitivity to progress and exceptionalness has been observed. Here one begins with pre-World War II American art, is led to Abstract Expressionism, and finally ends up in a series of rooms devoted to art since 1960. Along the way, there is a narrow gallery designed to take us through Matisse's 1952 cutout, *The Swimming Pool*, and then as soon as one gets to the contemporary art, another set of dramatic changes in design occurs. The rooms become larger. The carpet on their floors is replaced with wood. And a more flexible wall system, one that allows for the planned rotation of the contemporary collection, is used.

Of all the floors in the new MOMA, it is, however, the fourth, with its Philip Johnson Gallery exclusively devoted to architecture and design, that is the most innovative. Here the apartment-like intimacy of the second and third floors ends dramatically. As one rides up the fourth-floor escalator, a Bell 47D1 helicopter, suspended from the ceiling, looms overhead, and no sooner does one reach the floor than he is dazzled by another triumph of design, Pinin Farina's Cisitalla "202" GT Car standing next to a mirror. It is a display that leads directly to the Philip Johnson Gallery with its models of work by Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Louis Kahn. But most significantly, the differences between the two spaces — one featuring industrial design, the other architectural design — are not used to make snobbish distinctions but to point up aesthetic relationships in a technological age. The quietness of the Johnson Gallery is punctuated by the gurgling of two small fountains at opposite ends of a square of leather banquettes, and surrounding the architectural models of the gallery is an outer room that features a series of smaller design triumphs, ranging from an Eames chair to the protective goalie's mask worn by the Boston Bruins' Giles Gilbert.

It is a perfect climax to the sense of history and visual excitement that dominates the new MOMA. On the way down from the Philip Johnson Gallery, one is reminded of what MOMA has accomplished when he looks out the Garden Hall and sees the Chippendale-like pediment of Philip Johnson's new A.T.&T. Headquarters looming over 54th Street. No building in the city better sums up the attempt of post-modern achitecture to surprise us with novelty that mocks its classic roots. One is grateful Cesar Pelli did not feel the same impulse and that he and MOMA's directors have fashioned a museum in which Late Modernism was given a chance to flourish at its understated best. Their achievement permits us to see MOMA for what it is today: an institution that has brilliantly defined the modernism of our century and reached a point where it can in good conscience focus on connoisseurship.

NICOLAUS MILLS

(Nicolaus Mills, who writes regularly on art for Commonweal, *teaches at Sarah Lawrence.)*

COMING: J.S. Fuerst and Sam Mancuso on converting surplus schools into new housing; Janice A. Broun on Islam and the Soviet Union; Thomas Day on liturgical kitsch.

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Books: ETHICS, JESUS, & NONVIOLENCE

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM
A PRIMER IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Stanley Hauerwas
Notre Dame, $17.95, $7.95 paper, 179 pp.

John T. Pawlikowski

PROFESSOR HAUERWAS subtitles his latest volume "A Primer in Christian Ethics," and rightly so. For in some ways this is more a volume on the theological foundations and methodology of social ethics than a detailed ethical analysis of issues in the war/peace debate as the title itself, *The Peaceable Kingdom,* might suggest. But only in *some* ways because Hauerwas believes that peace, more precisely the Christian community witnessing to the peaceful kingdom, represents the heart of the church's ethical responsibility. As he insists, social ethics is not merely something the church formulates and preaches; it is something the church lives when its ethos is truly permeated by nonviolence.

In *The Peaceable Kingdom* Hauerwas gives us another engaging and challenging work which cannot be ignored even if one disagrees with some of his central premises. Parts of the volume offer a capsule summary of themes such as "character" that have been developed more fully in his previous writings. It is the clear application of these themes to the peace question, as well as a concise, first-time exposition of his ecclesial stance and the influences upon it, that make this volume unique. He himself acknowledges that no previous writings by him have so clearly exposed the methodologically crucial centrality of nonviolence as *The Peaceable Kingdom*: "Nonviolence is not just one implication among others that can be drawn from our Christian beliefs. It is at the very heart of our understanding of God."

The opening chapters confront some basic trends in social ethics which in Hauerwas's judgment rob Christian faith of its most important societal contribution. Among these thieving trends are the search for universal ethical foundations and Christianity's mistaken acceptance of itself as one "religion" among others. Both tend to reduce religious convictions to a secondary role in morality. Another unfortunate tendency is the emphasis on "Christology" rather than the narrative of Jesus's life and death; this frequently limits Christian faith to "an interpretation of humanity's need for meaning or some other provocative anthropological claim." Elsewhere, Hauerwas has faulted me for weakening the power of the Jesus myth (in my book *Christ in Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue*) in just these ways.

In this volume he specifically criticizes Timothy O'Connell, Richard McCormick, and Josef Fuchs. All of us, he argues, have terribly undercut the force of the Gospel narrative of Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection in shaping a nonviolent community of faith that bears witness to the peaceable kingdom. Only such witness, not abstract moral principles, can make an impact on contemporary society. Though Hauerwas does not totally downgrade ethics as a formal discipline, it has at best a secondary role: "Christian ethics, as a critical and reflective discipline cannot restore what only a community can hold together."

I have some sympathy for the directions in which Hauerwas is pushing. It is my contention that Christianity must relate its biblical and theological tradition much more explicitly to the formulation of its basic ethical posture towards critical social issues. I too have criticized O'Connell for overreliance on the natural law tradition and I agree with John Coleman that the church needs greater utilization of biblical imagery in constructing and articulating its moral positions in society. Too many attempts at religious social ethics wind up being nothing more than social science statements with a halo. But Hauerwas overstates the critique. In so doing he really fails to come to grips with the practical norms the peaceful community requires if it is to be involved at all in the decision-making processes of our society nationally and internationally.

Hauerwas's presentation of the Jesus myth remains too static and seemingly not subject at all to historical experience and the growth of historical consciousness. Nor does it take adequate account of the internal consciousness revolution represented by Freud and Jung. Any attempt to express the "human meaning" of the Christ-event, he asserts, must be clearly related to the specific narratives of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. With this I strongly concur. But the church cannot stop here in its proclamation of the Christ-event. It must endeavor to relate this narrative to the experience of other faiths and humanistic traditions in addressing common societal problems. And it must relate the Gospel to expanded human self-awareness as well as adjust the articulation of the Jesus myth to new historical experiences. Jurgen Moltmann's attempt to link Christological statement to the Holocaust would be one example of the latter. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her* would in part represent the former type of engagement. The above discussion ties in directly to another crucial point in the volume: the centrality of ecclesiology in social ethics. For Hauerwas the deepest meaning of the Jesus myth can only be appropriated within an ecclesial community. Hauerwas strongly rejects any individualistic concept of salvation. In this he clearly distances himself from many forms of evangelical Protestantism that relate the telling of the story primarily to the realm of personal salvation. The sacraments are crucial for him, especially baptism and the eucharist. He terms them not merely "religious things," but the "essential rituals of our politics." Here is another area where I am prepared to walk a long way with Hauerwas, but then sharply break company.

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In a plenary address to the 1984 meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy I argued strongly for the liturgical context of formation in moral commitment just as I have maintained that the statement of social ethics needs to flow more explicitly from the church's biblical and theological tradition. So the experience of the church at worship is absolutely central to the moral development of the Christian from my perspective. My disagreement with Hauerwas consists in the role he assigns the community which has been profoundly affected by the power of the scriptural narrative. It appears to be primarily to continue in the process of total transformation to nonviolence, a painful process in Hauerwas's eyes because it means leaving our lives totally in the control of others, and through this to offer the world a vision of the ultimate kingdom of peace. It is not clear to me to what extent Hauerwas believes we can actually bring about peace and justice in society through this witness. But what is clear is the inability of the church to sacrifice this nonviolent ideal for any reason, even to bring about a measure of concrete justice. He counsels *patience* in the face of injustice if legitimization of force is the only other option.

Such an approach clearly reveals Hauerwas's basic sectarian ecclesiology. This is not to say that I consider such an ecclesiology totally off-base. Ultimately, however, I would opt, and Catholicism has traditionally opted, for an ecclesiology that places the church more directly in history, that sees the church as having a more integral role in the development and defense of societies and cultures, than classical sectarian Christian thought would allow. Yes, there are dangers that such an approach might compromise Gospel ideals at times. But there is equal danger that the approach advocated by Hauerwas may result in the continued destruction of living persons. I am not prepared as an ethicist to say that our military resistance to Nazi genocide was immoral; nor am I able to say that Christians who lived under Somoza or in prerevolutionary Cuba were acting irresponsibly from a Christian moral perspective when they overthrew their oppressors by force. One need not be an unqualified supporter of either successor government to make such a judgment. And I would not rule out the use of violence in Poland or South Africa in certain circumstances if I thought there was some clear chance of success and such use did not threaten a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers.

> *I am in fact challenging the very idea that Christian social ethics is primarily an attempt to make the world more peaceable or just. Put starkly, the first social ethical task of the church is to be the church – the servant community. . . . [W]hat makes the church the church is its faithful manifestation of the peaceable kingdom in the world. As such the church does not have a social ethic; the church is a social ethic.*
>
> — **Stanley Hauerwas**
> *The Peaceable Kingdom*

I believe the approach I have advocated in the final analysis takes history much more seriously despite Hauerwas's argument that this is what he wishes to do. His approach has the effect of placing the church too much on the perimeter of human history. Up to a point I agree with Karl Rahner's contention that the total abrogation of power, including physical force, can be an act of Christian irresponsibility towards the world. I cannot "relativize" the value of self and survival to affirm the dignity of enemy and offender in the same unconditional fashion as Hauerwas and his mentor John Howard Yoder. I would rather adopt the view articulated by the French writer Regis Debray at his trial in South America that the only revolution worth winning is one in which a basic respect for the humanity of the enemy prevails even in the course of violent action.

Part of my reason for disagreeing with Hauerwas's ecclesiological vision has to do with somewhat differing interpretations of the Jesus myth. There are many points in his chapter on "Jesus and the Kingdom of God" that I would underscore. Love of enemy and the sense of kingdom present here and now are two prime examples. In light of my long-term involvement in Christian-Jewish dialogue, I am also appreciative of Hauerwas's positive portrayal of Jewish teaching, including that of Pharisaism, in relation to Jesus. But there are still serious deficiencies in the way Hauerwas relates Jesus to the internal Jewish social dynamics of first-century Palestine. And these affect his general stance on the peace issue. His is still too much of a "loner" Jesus, rather than a person involved to a significant degree in the attempt to undercut the religious and political power of the Temple priesthood. Jesus's invasion of the Temple is a critical event, and one not really dealt with by Hauerwas. It is hard to see how Jesus placed affirmation of the enemy as the highest priority in this episode.

There is little doubt in my mind that love of enemy and its related notions establish a firm preference for nonviolence in Christianity. But I am not convinced that the Jesus myth, as we come to understand better its emergence from Second Temple Judaism, is absolutely nonviolent in its orientation. Hence I do not think Christians in Nicaragua or Cuba who took up arms against their governments were seriously deviating from the Gospel ideal.

Hauerwas also has not adequately confronted the Hebrew Scriptures' position on war which Jesus never clearly repudiated. These Scriptures were an integral part of Jesus's spirituality, not just prelude for it. And they contain passages which some admittedly regard as harboring a totally outdated vision of a "warrior" God but which the liberation theologians have seen, more correctly I believe, as a statement of God's continuing concern and activity in behalf of justice for creation. Augustine appealed to the witness of the Hebrew Scriptures when devising the just-war theory. The Hebrew Scriptures have the advantage of exposing the reflections of the faithful community on war and peace in a variety of political situations (independence, exile, minority status, etc.), unlike the New Testament which was composed in a totally univocal political environment, that of an oppressed or at best tolerated minority with absolutely no hope of reclaiming self-governance. Hauerwas

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needs to deal more directly with the liberationist dimensions of the Hebrew Scriptures and their relationship to the message of Jesus.

There also exists a disturbing note in Hauerwas's approach to the Cross. He rightly says that the Cross should not be taken merely as "a general symbol of the moral significance of self-sacrifice." "Rather," he insists, "the Cross is Jesus's ultimate dispossession through which God has conquered the powers of this world. The Cross is not just a symbol of God's kingdom; it is that kingdom come." There is a danger that this approach isolates the Cross far too much from the rest of Jesus's active ministry and from the accomplishments of that ministry. The Cross was the consequence of that ministry and makes sense only in light of it. Its ultimate meaning lay not in the conquering of some demonic powers that remain a mystery but in the willingness of Jesus to pay the ultimate price to affirm human dignity. To undergird this affirmation through the revelation of the profound link between humanity and God that results from what Moltmann, in *The Crucified God*, would describe as the supreme expression of divine vulnerability. It was not "foreign" powers that were conquered by the Cross, but the internal destructive forces within each person that, as in the Nazi Holocaust, can turn human creative power to profoundly destructive ends in the drive to supplant the Creator God.

In the end, however, it has to be said that Hauerwas constructively challenges both the prevailing attitudes towards war/peace questions in much of Christianity as well as the general approach to doing social ethics, or in his phraseology "being socially ethical." While one may be able to go with him only part way, his contribution in *The Peaceable Kingdom* has significantly enriched the current debate.

Writers at the brink

WRITING IN A STATE OF SIEGE

André Brink
Summit Books, $15.95, 256 pp.

LIFE & TIMES OF MICHAEL K

J. M. Coetzee
The Viking Press, $13.95, 184 pp.

Alberto Manguel

WRITERS seem to be haunted by the doubt of whether their calling is useful or not. Again and again the questions arise: Can literature make anything happen? What purpose can literature serve? Why indulge in what Paul Valéry called "the unpunished vice"? These questions become more poignant when the writer who asks them is himself in a situation which seems to demand action, a situation which has become morally and physically unbearable; when the writer is

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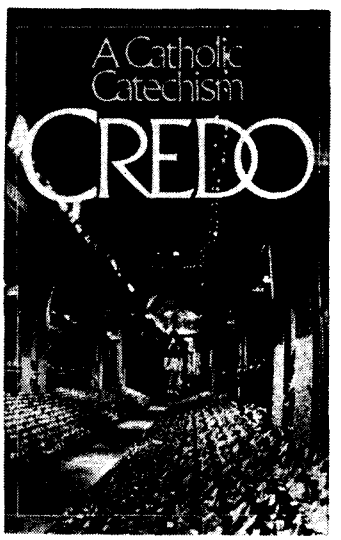

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made to live in a climate of terror and oppression. The answer, even in the most despairing cases, is that the purpose of literature is to help us understand the world we live in.

For André Brink the question arose when, as a young Afrikaans student in Paris, he was confronted with his country seen from the outside, without the blinkers which the South African government imposes on its people. In answer to the question, Brink left Paris. "Returning to South Africa," he says, "meant one thing: that writing had become an indispensable dimension of my life; and that I was prepared to assume full responsibility for every word I would write in the future." The writer's career was launched.

Twenty years later, having written five novels of varied success (his latest, *A Chain of Voices*, was highly acclaimed) André Brink collected his political and literary writings in a volume called *Writing in a State of Siege*. The state of siege is the one imposed upon the writer by a coercive system, a state in which the writer is persecuted, forced into silence or exile. To survive, the writer has only one recourse: to speak the truth through "the quality of his work." "If the work is worth it," Brink writes, "it contains within itself the mechanisms that ensure its survival."

The literature of South Africa exists in two languages (as in Canada or Belgium). South African writers write in English or Afrikaans, but while the English writer is censored after publication, the Afrikaans writer must suffer from pre-publication censorship. The English writer can get published abroad; the Afrikaans writer depends on the will of local publishers. "It is all so unnecessary," says Brink. "A book which fails in its exploration of significant patterns in society and in the relationships of individuals, is doomed to die — whether attacked by the puritans or not; and a truly good book will inevitably survive, in spite of all attempts to kill it, just as *Madame Bovary* survived, or, in our time, *Dr. Zhivago*."

Throughout the volume Brink is concerned with both the truth and the quality of writing. From essay to essay we are taken on an investigation of social insanity, on a logical hunt for the monsters of unreason. In André Brink's words, in his lucid examples, the succinct statement that South Africa is an unjust state where men are judged by the color of their skin, takes on a startling intensity. Brink is fighting for his country's sanity, and for that reason cannot dismiss his country's wrongs. "'My Country, right or wrong,'" said G. K. Chesterton, "is on the same moral level as 'My Mother, drunk or sober.'" Brink is trying to make his country sober.

Three characters appear in Brink's essays: the oppressed who suffers the machineries of the state; the oppressor who keeps his machineries oiled; and the questioner who tries to understand the absurdity of the system. The three are central figures in *Life & Times of Michael K*, the new novel by J. M. Coetzee, author of the celebrated *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The oppressed is Michael K. Having lost his job as a gardener in Cape Town, Michael K promises to take his sick mother back to her birthplace in Prince Albert. Before they reach it she dies and Michael K is left with a jar full of her ashes. He finds a deserted farm and, for a time, tries to live off the land, but the appearance of the farm owner's grandson — an army deserter — makes Michael take to the hills. There he is caught and "resettled." He escapes from the resettlement camp, returns to the farm and lives like a nocturnal animal, sleeping during the day. But again he is recaptured and, suspected of helping the guerrillas, he is put in a rehabilitation camp. Here Michael K meets the questioner: a doctor who is trying to understand through what he sees, the world surrounding him. The oppressor is of course everywhere: it is the framework of society — the soldiers, the merchants, the invisible rich. In the end there are no answers, only more questions.

> *Not a month after they opened the gates everyone was sick. Dysentery, then measles, then flu, one on top of the other. From being shut up like animals in a cage. The district nurse came in, and you know what she did? Ask anyone who was here, they will tell you. She stood in the middle of the camp where everyone could see, and she cried.*
>
> — J. M. Coetzee
> *Life & Times of Michael K*

The world Coetzee paints is at war: we are not told against what, or why. The war is simply there, engulfing all. The world is in a state of siege. "War is the father of all and king of all," reads the novel's epigraph. "Some he shows as gods, others as men. Some he makes slaves, and others free." It becomes obvious in the novel that the border which separates gods and men, slaves and free souls, is a very hazy one.

Michael's surname echoes that of Kafka's heroes: K in *The Castle* and *The Trial*, and Karl in *Amerika*, heroes who, like Michael, are forced into a search they never understand, aiming for a goal that will never be reached. Michael K is Everyman: a remarkable feature in Coetzee's book is that the color of the characters' skin is never specifically mentioned. The injustice suffered by Michael K is suffered by us all: injustice against

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one man is an injustice against humankind. We care, because in the oppression of anyone it is the human race that is being oppressed. Nothing is explained because nothing has an explanation in an inhuman society: "Why have I been sent here?" Michael wants to ask the guard in the resettlement camp. "How long do I have to stay?" "But the guard went on sleeping, and K lacked the courage to shout."

In Michael K's story, Coetzee has recreated the myth of the wanderer — the Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman — the man who tries to find, and is denied, a place on this earth. That is the plight of the oppressed. Coetzee's myth is, in this sense, more powerful than countless political pamphlets, and that of course is the strength of literature. "Literature," says André Brink, "angers the advocates of the brave new world precisely because they fear the harm it can do to their devastatingly logical systems and tyrannies: that is, because it has some mysterious power in a world that would like to pretend an evolution beyond the need of mystery. And this power is, I should suggest, the residual magic of myth. Literature in our world fulfills what it can of the function of myth in a seemingly more simple society."

All systems on 'go'

ORDER OUT OF CHAOS
MAN'S NEW DIALOGUE WITH NATURE
Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers
Bantam, $8.95, 349 pp.

David Burns

PUBLISHED BY Gallimard in 1979 under the title, *La nouvelle alliance*, this book by the winner of the 1977 Nobel Prize in chemistry and philosopher-scientist Isabelle Stengers, has been a European best-seller. It has also been a catalyst for an intellectual bun-fight among disciplines as diverse as entomology and epistemology. The authors have now translated their book, in the process rewriting the central section. Their language is remarkably clear and mainly nontechnical, but their ideas are wide-ranging and complex.

The metaphors and myths of science help us make sense of the diversity of natural phenomena. These models also limit our view of reality. Newton, hailed as "The New Moses," deduced the laws of mass, acceleration, and inertia. If the initial conditions were known, these immutable laws could predict the outcome. This paradigm viewed the universe as a kind of wind-up toy, a machine which could run forward or backward, essentially timeless.

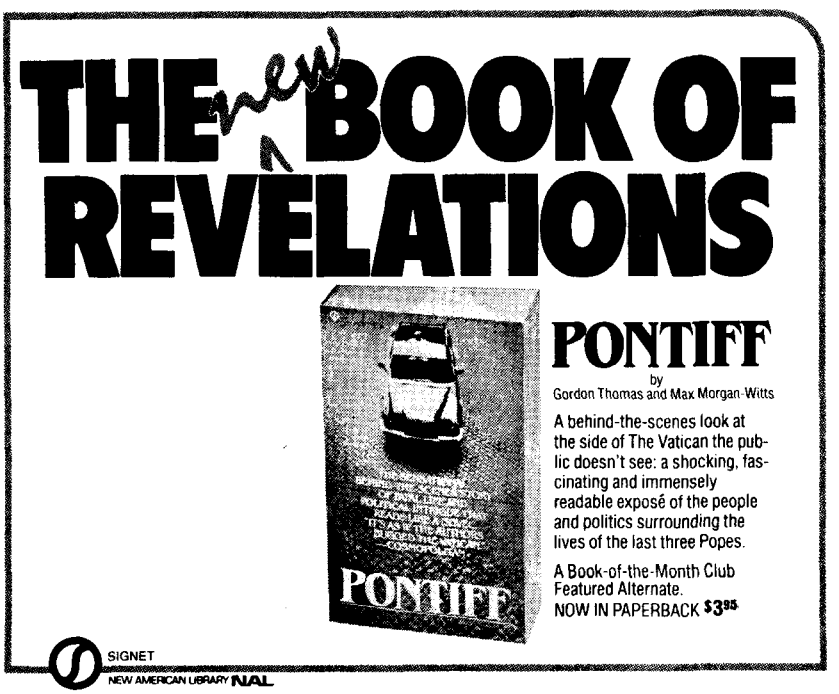
In the Age of Steam, physicists began to challenge the timelessness implicit in the mechanistic image. Thermodynamics showed that useful energy was irrevocably lost; the machine could not go on forever; heat death was our ultimate fate. The Second Law required an end; it also implied a beginning. It was once again reasonable to imagine an arrow of time.

Darwin's followers introduced a contradictory thought: the machine might be running down, but biological systems, at least, were running up, becoming more, not less, organized. Einstein pointed out that the machine looked different, in fact was different, depending on where you stood within it. Quantum physics explored the paradox that, at the subatomic level at least, the machine was no more than a fortuitous probabilistic assemblage of random distributions. The micro-world was governed by chance, and God threw the dice.

Prigogine and Stengers argue that the laws of classical physics work best when applied to closed systems and to local regions of reality. Traditional science emphasized stability, order, uniformity, and equilibrium, and was concerned mainly with closed systems in which, like a machine, there is a linear relationship between input and result.

But most systems of interest to us — whether societies or snowflakes — are open systems, fueled by a constant exchange of energy and matter with their environment. Information and innovation are critical, and the modern world is dominated by nonlinear relationships in which small inputs can trigger massive consequences. Moreover, the world we perceive is dominated by exponential change, often leading to disorder, instability, disequilibrium. The metaphor is no longer a machine obeying "laws," but of biological organisms in dynamic evolution.

The study of turbulence and fluid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dynamics including the global ocean-atmosphere system which determines the climate, has made clear that much behavior is non-linear — everything is connected to everything else, and the fate of one bit depends on all the other bits. Prigogine notes that all such systems contain sub-systems which are in constant flux. Feedbacks can reinforce the fluctuations until a sub-system becomes dominant. In time, the sub-system can impose a new quasi-equilibrium. This is what the authors call a "singular moment" or a "bifurcation point."

Prigogine and Stengers argue that order and coherence often arise spontaneously from disorder and chaos, and they offer a variety of examples ranging from the clumping of interstellar matter to the self-aggregation of insect colonies. Prigogine discusses the kinetics of chemical instabilities, in which substances oscillate periodically between one state ("red") and another ("blue"). Whether in chemistry or sociology, the reinforcing feedbacks are crucial; they produce "self-organization" or "autocatalysis."

Ilya Prigogine is a physical chemist who directs Solvay Institute and teaches at the Free University of Brussels and at the Center for Studies in Statistical Mechanics at the University of Texas. He was born in Moscow at the outbreak of the Revolution, and his family fled first to Lithuania, then Berlin, before settling in Belgium. Sometimes called the "poet of thermodynamics," Prigogine is also an accomplished classical pianist and widely read in literature, archeology, art, and history. This humanistic background may have prompted him to search for a new scientific metaphor — the prospect that man can understand, and be reassured by, a Nature that allows "order" to emerge from "chaos."

"The dichotomy between the 'two cultures,'" write Prigogine and Stengers, "is to a large extent due to the conflict between the atemporal view of classical science and the time-oriented view that prevails in a large part of the social sciences and humanities. But in the past few decades, something very dramatic has been happening in science, something as unexpected as the birth of geometry or the grand vision of the cosmos as expressed in Newton's work. We are becoming more and more conscious of the fact that on all levels, from elementary particles to cosmology, randomness and irreversibility play an ever-increasing role. *Science is rediscovering time.* It is this conceptual revolution that this book sets out to describe."

FATHER JOHN T. PAWLIKOWSKI, O.S.M., *is an associate professor of religion at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.*

ALBERTO MANGUEL *teaches at York University in Toronto. He is co-author of* The Dictionary of Imaginary Places.

DAVID BURNS *is a project director at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington.*

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(Continued from page 386)

unwavering than due process can be defined in a single stroke or phrase or test. The Clause erects a "blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier depending on all the circumstances of a particular relationship."

The majority found that Pawtucket did, indeed, have a secular purpose for including the crèche in the overall display. "The display is sponsored by the city to celebrate the holiday and to depict the origins of that holiday." The display, taken as a whole, also helped bring business into the downtown Pawtucket area.

Second, as my article pointed out, the Supreme Court has approved much greater expenditures of public money which indirectly aided religion than what was involved in Pawtucket — for textbooks and transportation for students attending church-sponsored schools and for college buildings of church-affiliated institutions which combine secular and religious instruction, for example. The Pawtucket crèche, by contrast, is valued at $200, and erecting and dismantling it costs the city only about $20 per year, plus minimal expenses for lighting.

Third, even Federal District Judge Pettine found that there has been no entanglement between church authorities and the state regarding either the content or design of the exhibit concerning the crèche.

Nor had the crèche caused political divisiveness in Pawtucket prior to the filing of the instant lawsuit. My article noted that "the chief minority group likely to be offended, our Jewish brethren, did not join in the suit to ban the crèche." Leo Pfeffer, quoting dissenting Justice William Brennan, claims that Jewish quiescence "'may have reflected nothing more than their sense of futility

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in opposing the majority.''' ''More bluntly,'' he continues, ''the answer is fear, a fear which often impels silence, even when one's constitutional rights have been impinged.''

It is difficult to know with *certitude* why Jewish organizations in the Pawtucket community did not join in the lawsuit. I like to think that, apart from the litigants, the reason the Jewish community did not get upset about the crèche is that religious tolerance has grown enormously in this country in the past thirty-five years. In the fifties, just outside St. Paul's Roman Catholic church in Cambridge, was St. Benedict's Center, populated by the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Its director, Father Leonard Feeney, S. J., preached that there could be no salvation outside the Roman Church. In contrast, during the past few years, there has been started a tradition of joint Holy Week and Passover seder services between Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel and the Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Student Center. Much of the debate between the dissenters and the majority focused on the historical factors in which separation between church and state was rooted. In my view, Chief Justice Burger's conception of history as a living and evolving process seems on the mark:

> The Court has acknowledged that the ''fears and political problems'' that gave rise to the Religion Clauses in the eighteenth century are of far less concern today . . . . We are unable to perceive the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Vicar of Rome, or other powerful religious leaders behind every public acknowledgment of the religious heritage long officially recognized by the three constitutional branches of government. Any notion that these symbols pose a real danger of establishment of a state church is farfetched indeed.

In the last sentence of his letter, Leo Pfeffer finds ''nothing commendable in a decision which for all practical purposes tells us that this is a Christian country, whether you like it or not.'' That seems to be greatly overstating the impact of the Court's decision. According to the Supreme Court's long-standing interpretation of the Establishment Clause, governmental action should not advance, but also should not *inhibit* religion. Not all the Christ should be taken out of Christmas. ''In God We Trust'' is printed on our currency, and court sessions throughout the land open with the marshal declaring, ''God save the United States and this honorable court.'' In its 1983 decision in *Marsh v. Chambers*, the Supreme Court approved the practice of opening state legislative sessions with prayer. Moreover, as one friend conversant with religion has written me: ''Every fall New York schools have holidays on Jewish holy days. That tells me that New York is a Jewish city — in the sense that there are a lot of Jews here and their religious feelings and obligations should be accommodated. It doesn't tell me that New York is a Jewish city in some sense of 'established religion' or in some sense threatening my own belief.''

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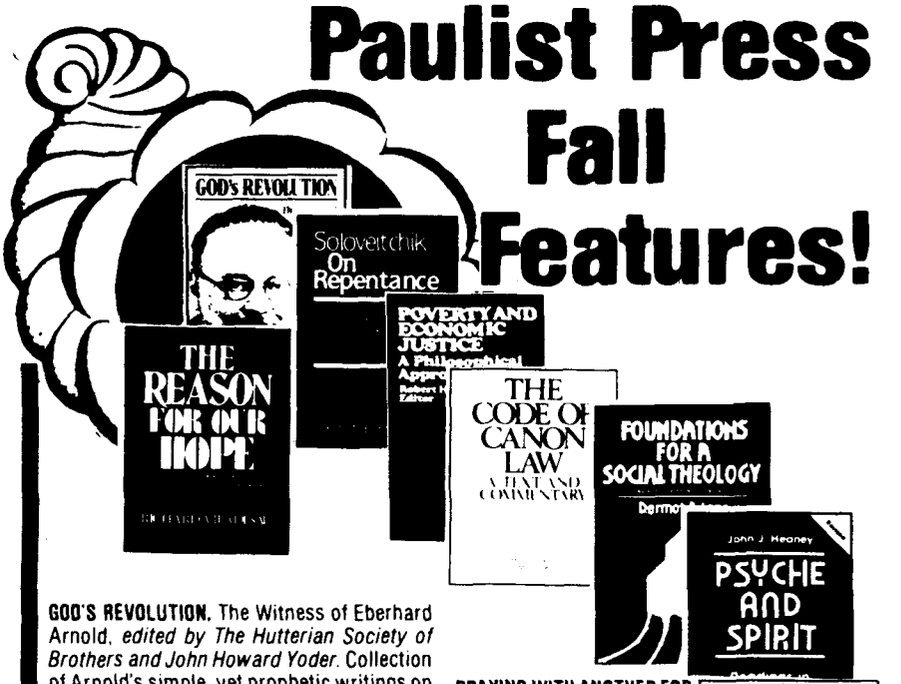

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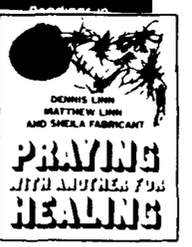

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Nonetheless, I am not Jewish. One close friend of mine, who is, recalls his experience as one of a very few Jews in a school with a Christian tradition. "You don't know what it is like, Mo, to be a minority and always be made to feel such." He is a very bright, sensitive man, and I have to have great respect for his feelings.

This reply to Leo Pfeffer has been written while I have been a patient at the Harvard University Health Services. Harvard is a private university and does not fall under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. When I was served dinner on Easter Sunday at the Health Services, the napkin and placemat with which the food was served were decorated with Easter lillies and the message, "He is risen." In addition, the placemat carried the biblical exhortation: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Ordinarily I probably would not have paid much attention to this, perhaps because it was compatible with my own Christianity.

But Leo Pfeffer's letter was on my mind. So I asked around Stillman Infirmary to see if anyone objected. The first person I asked was a Korean, who said that he had no particular religion. He did not object to the messages on the placemat and napkin. Next I asked a Muslim, who did not object either. But then I asked a Jewish undergraduate, whom I had come to know. He seemed particularly sensitive, tolerant, and kind. But he strongly felt that the Christian inscriptions were offensive and did not belong in an infirmary which served a very religiously diverse clientele.

With this insight I approached Dr. Warren Wacker, Director of the Harvard University Health Services and Henry K. Oliver Professor of Hygiene at Harvard Medical School. He immediately felt that my undergraduate friend had a most valid point. Henceforth, at the Health Services, only secular placemats and napkins will be provided. MAURICE deG. FORD

Correction

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: My review discussing the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez [June 15] contained several editorial additions that did not stem from my pen and do not represent my opinions:

First, the modifier "somewhat simplistically" is added to a sentence on the theory of dependency. Although I disagree with Gutiérrez's use of theory of dependency, in no way would I call that theory of dependency or his use of it "simplistic." "Simplistic" is a slogan often used against the theories of liberation theology that I abhor and reject.

Second, the adjective "nearly sole" added to the poor as agents of social change connotes a degree of exclusiveness that I would not want to attribute to Gutiérrez.

Third, in describing his preferential option for the poor, I wrote: "it could neglect." This became "courts disaster by neglecting." I deliberately used the subjunctive to express a possible consequence — not a present fact.

I would appreciate your bringing these corrections to the attention of your readers.

FRANCIS SCHUSSLER FIORENZA

The editorial changes to which Mr. Schüssler Fiorenza justly objects were made in an effort to clarify and heighten what we believed he was saying in those sentences. In order to get this remarkable review into print while the controversy about Cardinal Ratzinger's criticism of liberation theology was still fresh, the normal procedure of checking such alterations with the author was foregone. We are sorry for this, and for any damage to the precise meaning the reviewer meant to convey.

THE EDITORS

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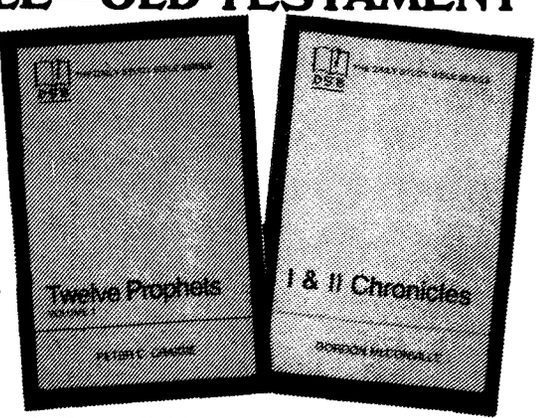

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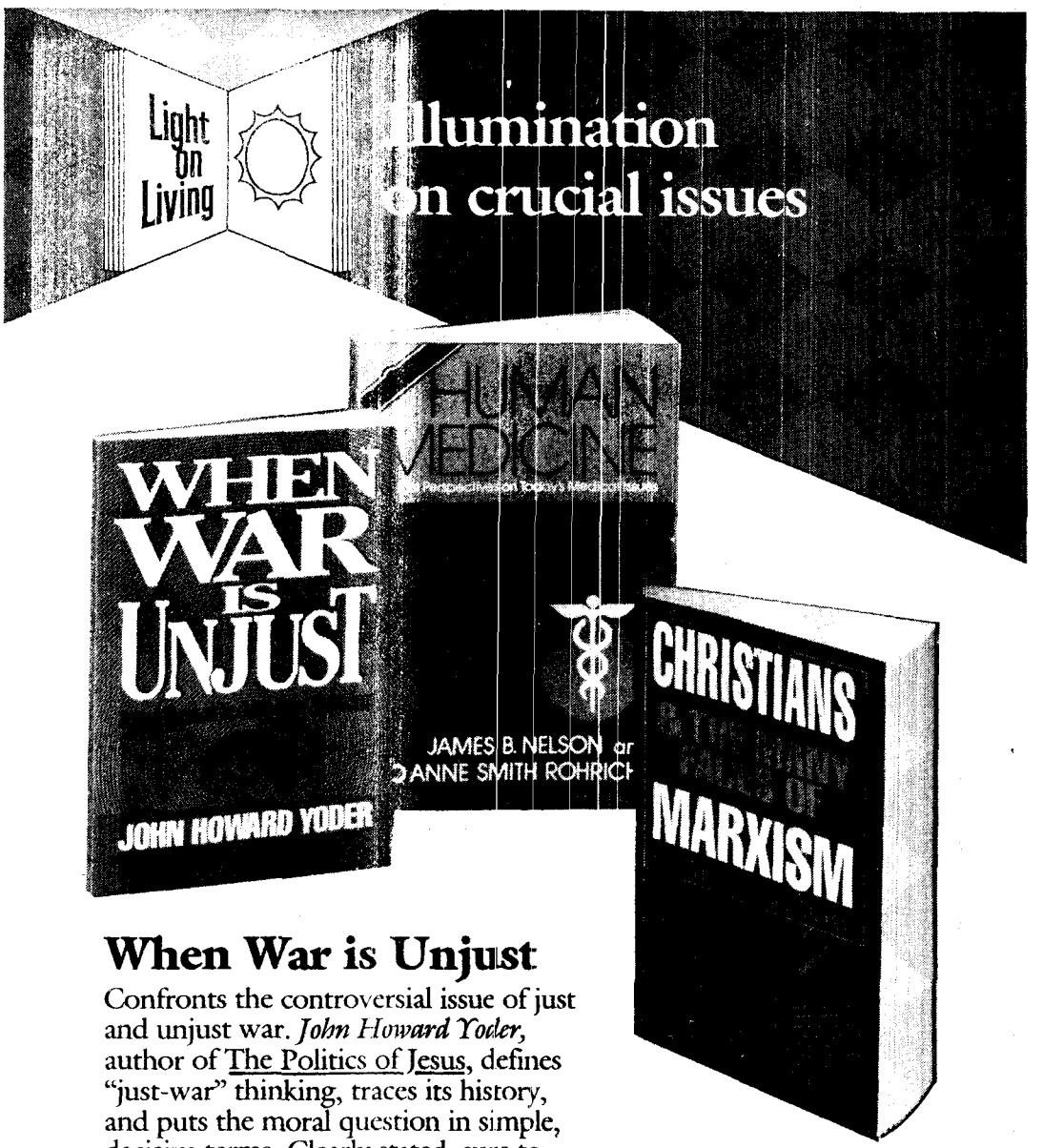

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